

THE INTERSECTIONS OF MILITARY FAMILY CULTURE AND BLACK FAMILY  
CULTURE: CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF BEING A BLACK DAUGHTER IN  
A MILITARY FAMILY

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## DEDICATION

To my children: Michael Johnson, Kevin Johnson, Amanda Bieber, and Alisha Plummer. You have been especially supportive through completing this dissertation; my illness; and my retirement, which for me is putting on a new attitude and going in a different direction. I love you. Your encouragement helped me get this far. I am very fortunate to have two men in my life who married my daughters and have directly helped me or assisted my daughters in helping and supporting me. These men, Jim Plummer and Adrian Bieber, are always right there when I need them. They have become my sons. Sheri Shaw is my support through her life-long partnership with my son, Michael.

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Pinkie Irene Evans

THE INTERSECTIONS OF MILITARY FAMILY CULTURE AND BLACK FAMILY  
CULTURE: CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF BEING A BLACK DAUGHTER IN  
A MILITARY FAMILY

Research on military families has increased since the beginning of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; however, the research focuses on military families is general with little specific information on Black families within the military. Given the known general impact of race, this is a critical gap in the research into military families. This qualitative descriptive study explores the life of Black daughters in military families by examining the challenges and benefits of growing up as a Black daughter in a military family. There were three primary research questions asked of the participants about their experiences: 1) What challenges did you experience growing up in a military family; 2) What benefits did you experience growing up in a military family; and, 3) Do you believe that being Black affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)? The participants also answered two additional questions of importance to social workers and health practitioners who work with military families: 1) What advice would you give to social workers who work with military families?; and, 2) What advice would you have for the military to help families address the challenges you have mentioned? The answers to the primary research questions are reviewed through the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), models of systems theory, mettle, adaptability, and transformability. Consideration of the “Strong Black Woman” perspective is also examined. A look at the roles that women play as well as roles imposed on women by others is explored. Implications for social workers, health practitioners, and schools of

social work are discussed, inclusive of military family culture and the importance of cultural competence in considering the intersections of a person's life: racial identity in addition to military implications.

Kathy Lay, PhD, Chair

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AET	Acquisition Education and Training
AT	Advanced Training
BX	Base Exchange
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
DOD	Department of Defense
DSM-IV TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition
EPAS	Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
MWR	Moral Welfare Recreation
MMRI	Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
OCS	Officer Candidate School
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
OTEMPO	Operational Tempo
PDA	Public Display of Affection
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
PX	Post Exchange
R&R	Rest and Recuperation
RAF	Royal Air Force
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
SRT	Shame Resilience Theory
TDY	Temporary Duty
VA	Veterans Health Administration
WMDs	Weapons of Mass Destruction

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

There has been a national military presence throughout the history of the United States. The historical events related to Bunker Hill, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea; conflicts such as Vietnam and Grenada; the Gulf War; and the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq are all familiar to us as part of our shared culture. What is less well known is how families of the soldiers who fight these wars cope with being part of their shared military culture.

Research on military families has increased since the beginning of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Barker & Berry, 2009; Blaisure, Saathoff-Wells, Pereira, MacDermid Wadsworth, & Dombro, 2012; Bowen, G.L, Mancini, J.A., Martin, J.A., Ware, W.B., Nelson, J.P, 2003; Chandra, 2011; Denning, Meisnere, & Warner, 2014); however, the research focused on military families is general, with little specific information on Black families within the military. Given the known general impact of race, this is a critical gap in the research into military families.

### **Why Be Concerned about the Military and Veterans?**

Many veterans (80%) have the perception that the American public does not understand the problems faced by service members and their families (Blaisure et al., 2012). One of the reasons that it is important to understand the issues current service members experience is their age. Almost one-half (49. 6%) of Active Duty enlisted personnel are 25 years old or younger (Department of Defense, 2014). Service members who are 26 to 30 years old are the next largest group (22. 1%; Department of Defense, 2014). A total of 85.7% of Active Duty enlisted service members and 2% of Active Duty officers are 35 years old or younger (Department of Defense, 2014). The current life

expectancy is 76.4 years old for men and 81.2 years old for women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Issues faced by these military service members and/or their families, including the need for physical, mental, and emotional care, could require attention for 60 years or more.

Bilmes (2013) states that, as of 2012, more than 2.5 million service members had served in the Global War on Terrorism in combat duty. More than 1.56 million (78%) had left active duty and qualified for government care (2013). However, a 2008 report found that only 41% of service members who left the military and qualified for Veterans Health Administration (VA) care were enrolled. (Kang, 2008). Westphal and Convoy (2015) found that the bulk of a veteran's healthcare occurs in non-military (civilian) facilities. Although Westphal and Convoy's (2015) study focused on civilian nursing concerns, civilian social workers must also understand how military culture, policies, and research can influence mental health behaviors, determine if someone will seek help, and impact the therapeutic relationships. Particularly relevant is the stigma within the military community attached to seeking help of any kind, including mental health services. The veterans who do not use VA services are using civilian healthcare facilities (2015), which in itself might lead to circumstances that bring that individual to the attention of a social worker.

### **Broadening the Scope of Inquiry – Why include the families?**

When a service member returns home from a war, the war comes home with him/her. This person might experience nightmares, sleeplessness, depression, anxiety, unexplained anger, and other stress disorders (Cantrell & Dean, 2005). Spouses of service members suffer with their loved ones. Examples of how service members' disorders can

disrupt their spouses' lives include sleep disturbances or being frightened by their partner's crisis of terror. In some cases, spouses suffer bodily harm because the service member awakes startled and not aware of where s/he is.

This fear of being harmed in the middle of the night can lead to a state of hypervigilance in spouses (and other family members) which can lead to not sleeping well so they are not well rested the next day (Cantrell & Dean, 2005). A working spouse goes to work tired, sometimes showing stress, tension, and anxiety; this sleeplessness can lead to feeling a loss of control (2005).

Wagner, Director of the Medical Family Assistance Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, as cited in *Down Range: To Iraq and Back* that "when a soldier is wounded, the family and community are also wounded" (Cantrell & Dean, 2005, p. 105). Many of us fail to understand the sacrifices made by the family when a loved one goes to war. Also cited in Cantrell & Dean (2005) Wagner states "when a warrior goes to war, the family goes to war, when a warrior gets wounded, the family and community gets wounded as well" ( p. 107). When the service member or warrior comes home, all of us are impacted. Wagner continues:

Every man and woman that goes to war gets wounded in one way or another. The soul gets wounded in every warrior. Souls connected first through family, each wounded soul affects the rest of the systems. Just as we as individuals are systems of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual parts that are interconnected: families are systems, communities are systems, countries are systems, the world is a system. When one part of us is out of balance our entire system is affected. (Cantrell & Dean, 2005, p. 107).

Because we are all interconnected, we are all wounded (Cantrell & Dean, 2005). A Pew Research Center Report (2011) stated that post 9/11 veterans have had mental health impacts including post-traumatic stress (44% for combat veterans); family life strain

(48%); anger management problems (47%); and readjustment concerns (44%). Given that what impacts the service member or veteran also impacts the family, concerns must include the family. VA services are only available to family members at the request of the veteran. If 59% of eligible veterans are choosing to ask for help from other sources, or to not ask for it at all (Kang, 2008), then it is plausible that a high percentage of military family members are also seeking help elsewhere or not at all. Combined with demographic trends, this suggests an impact on the social work field for many years to come.

### **Area of Interest for Study – African American Women Members of Military Families**

While more is being written in recent decades about the effects of the latest wars on service members and their families, including information on Black women who served in the military branches during various wars (Adams Earley, 1989; Benedict, 2009; Biank, 2013; Desnoyers-Colas, 2014; Fenner & deYoung, 2001; Holmstedt, 2007; Latty, 2004; Moore, 1996; Mullenbach, 2013; The Curators of the University of Missouri, 1999; Wynn, 2011), very little of this work focuses on the coping skills of the Black women who are the spouses, significant others, daughters, mothers, and sisters of those who serve before, during, and after wartime. Most of the available information addresses domestic violence and the stigma attached to seeking behavioral health services (Danish & Antonides, 2013; Jones, 2003; McCarroll et al., 2010). The gap in the literature about how Black women fare in military families is one that needs to be addressed.

## **Scope of Study**

This study examined the effects of being part of a military family on the Black women involved in the lives of service members. The aim was to uncover greater insight into the strategies of coping within military culture, policies that influence their daily lives, and how social work practice can have an impact on the lives of Black women associated with military families. Although this new area of study should eventually include the perspectives of spouses, significant others, daughters, mothers, and sisters on these issues, each of these relationships brings a significantly different focus deserving specific attention. In order to do one of these well, the scope of this study focused on Black women who are daughters of those who served in one of the military branches and were assigned to combat zones. How this outlook made Black women better able to face the challenges of belonging to military family culture is important. This scope supported the researcher's general research agenda which proposes to broaden the base of knowledge about the intersection of Black women and military family cultures.

## **Researcher's Role: My Story**

Before I began to ask other daughters of Black military families how their upbringing presented challenges to overcome and benefits to acknowledge, as well as ask them to reflect on their lives as part of a military family, I needed to examine the roots of my interest in this topic. I have many memories of my life growing up as a child of the military, as a proud "Army Brat." I am the daughter of a military father who retired from the U.S. Army as a Command Sergeant Major. At the time of my father's appointment to this rank, I remember my parents celebrating with great excitement. Later I found out that it was quite unusual for a Black man to achieve the rank of Command Sergeant Major.

Both of my parents are now deceased. They were of a generation that kept family secrets, many things were not discussed, but I do remember my parents talking about some aspects of their lives that, of course, also influenced my siblings and myself.

My father served in World War II and left the military at the end of the war. He was recalled to the military during the Korean Conflict and continued to re-enlist until he retired with 32 years of Active Duty Military Service. He told my three brothers, two sisters, and me that he left Indianapolis because as a Black man he felt he had more opportunities for success outside of Indiana. He also wanted to leave Indianapolis because of the barriers we would face there as Black children. My mother simply told us that Indianapolis was not a place to raise children.

My first memories of military life are of flying to Ireland and then to France to meet my father when he was stationed in La Rochelle, France when I was five years old. At the time we left Indianapolis, my youngest sister was not yet part of the family. She was born in the military hospital just outside La Rochelle. Appropriately, her middle name is Rochelle. We lived in Angoulins-Sur-Mer, a small town outside La Rochelle. In 2017, I returned as an adult to La Rochelle and Angoulins-Sur-Mer. This trip, combined with my current research, renewed memories and stirred unanswered questions, reinforcing my interest in the mislaid memories and questions of other military daughters: memories they may now be ready to reclaim and questions they may now be ready to have answered. One of my goals with the dissertation was to begin to recover these memories and identify the questions they, and I, still carry. Another one of my goals was to open up the discussions that make this possible. An example of these unanswered questions is why a primary memory I have of my mother is that she was unhappy most of



the time. My mother had a hard time making and keeping friends. I do not know if this was because we moved so often. My mother could have been depressed. This was not discussed at that time. Since my mother is deceased and she chose not to discuss these things when she was alive, I can no longer ask her and will probably never know.

This makes time of critical importance in this work. To fill in the gaps we have in understanding our childhood experiences, we need to talk to our relatives and friends who were adults when we were children. My parents are gone, but others can still have these conversations before their parents, other relatives, and adult friends are taken from them by illness, forgetfulness, or death.

Many of my memories are of the challenges inherent in the life of a military family. For me, the greatest of these was frequent, and in my recollection, inconvenient moving. These moves sometimes occurred after the beginning of the school year, making it hard to become part of a new social group. The first of these moves was after I had already started second grade in the only school I had ever known, the American Military School (a Department of Defense school) near my father's duty station in La Rochelle, France.

My father's new duty station was at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. For the first few months after this transfer, my mother and we children stayed with my father's mother in Indianapolis. While there, I attended public school for the first time. I was the only student from an active service family in my class. In one move, I left my friends, the country I was familiar with, and military culture.

I spoke fluent French at the time and I must have had an odd-sounding accent because I remember some children making fun of me. One of the neighborhood children

called me “Frenchie.” I think he meant it in a friendly way, but other children picked up the name and did not say it kindly. I even remember some cousins telling me that I thought I was better than they were because I had lived in France and I could speak French. I did not understand what they were saying at the time. I just remember that they were mean to me. Although I was not sure what people were talking about, I could definitely tell that they did not want to be friends with me because they thought that I was different. I felt alone and I wanted my father to come and get us. After a few months, we moved to join him and I again changed communities. Though this change was also in the middle of the school year, it was a little easier because the school at Fort Leonard Wood was on the Army Post. I was again with children whose parents were in the military. The school was different because the teachers were accustomed to children arriving and leaving throughout the school year, so they tried to make us feel welcome. Although our new home was in a trailer park, at least we were together again.

My challenges in these moves were not only those of adapting to new schools, but also to new communities. Although there were few Black people in France, our family was part of the community of the small town in which we lived. Everyone knew us, including the children with whom we played. My world got smaller in Indianapolis where I played only with my siblings and cousins. At Fort Leonard Wood, this circle was further reduced to only my brothers and sisters. I felt very lonely. Later, I was able to become friends with several children. We were stable there for about five years before moving to Fort Riley, Kansas, between seventh and eighth grades. This was a hard time to move. I left friends that I had known for several years. For the first time I attended a religious school off Post. Most of my friends went to the public school off Post. We saw

each other only after school or on weekends. This was very different from going to the same school with my friends; we did not have the same teachers and experiences to talk about when we got together.

We left Fort Riley when I was a sophomore in high school, returning to Indianapolis when my father was transferred to Korea for a second time. We moved in April, very near the end of the school year. It was a difficult transition. Because my parents were building a new home on the east side, my new school was on the east side of town, but we lived with my grandmother on the near south side while the house was being built. We had to depend on my oldest brother for transportation to school. Because my brother had an accident shortly after we began to attend school, we missed the entire second week of school. This put me further behind and gave me very little time to make friends due to the schoolwork I had to make up.

Our move to the new house brought another change that critically impacted my social connections: it was the first time we lived in a predominately, if not all Black, neighborhood. Though most of the other children attended the local public school, my parents again sent me to a religious school outside our neighborhood. Similar, to my experience in second grade, people told me that I did not talk like them and that I must think that I am better than they are. Although I was not sure in the second grade, what people were talking about, in high school I could definitely tell that the people in my neighborhood did not want to be friends with me because they thought that I was different. These childhood physical, cultural, and social moves brought me challenges that I converted into benefits, though this sometimes took a while.

The most painful challenge to me as a child was making and maintaining friends. For the reasons described above, by the age of nine I became something of a loner. It was easier to stay by myself than to try to make new friends. The friends I made in military families could be with me today and gone tomorrow if their parent were reassigned. I stayed to myself except for making a few friends in each location. My schools, until sophomore year in high school, were on Army posts or just outside the post. Most of the children that I went to school with were just like me: military brats who understood what I was going through. We made friends quickly but also learned to let go because we knew the next day someone we liked could be gone. Sometimes friends' parents went on TDY (temporary duty) at another location. Friends who left during the school year were welcomed back if they returned during the school year, as if they had never left. We just talked about what had occurred while they were gone.

The gift of this experience is that I learned to value and nurture the friendships I do create, especially with those who share a similar background. My closest friends are a woman who was also an Army brat I met as a teenager in Fort Riley and a woman who moved with her husband in the military, and his post-military jobs included several relocations. I have remained friends with these women over many years. We treasure our relationships and realize that they are special because of the many people who have entered and exited our lives, and because, even though our lives have evolved, we can pick up a conversation like it was yesterday. We hold onto each other when needed.

A second benefit that I created from the challenge of frequent moves is my lifelong love of reading and learning. Because these relocations made it difficult to develop friendships, and sometimes impossible to sustain them, I turned to books at an

early age. The need for companions I could take with me when we moved and return to when I needed the familiar led me to become a voracious reader, which served me when I transferred into new schools because the teachers noticed and valued that I like to read for its own sake. This love of reading and of learning new things has remained with me through adulthood, serving me well in my scholarly and professional journeys. To this day, I read everything I can find about the people, organizations, and history in my new ventures.

The challenges of moving combined with the gift of reading have given me an additional benefit that I would not want to live without--the love of travel. My father's career took us to places that I never would have otherwise seen. I learned about people and cultures that I otherwise would not know. This embedded in me an understanding that it was possible to travel great distances, but I first became curious about new and different people and places when I read the World Book for extra credit in one of my classes in grade school. To this day, leaving my comfort zone to explore other places and experience different cultures is one of my favorite things to do.

Another challenge with which I had to wrestle was the impact of strict military discipline in our home. As the oldest daughter, it fell to me to keep the house ready for inspection, starch and iron uniforms according to military standards (tasks my older brothers were never considered for), and generally obey all the rules as to not bring any dishonor to my father. This led me to try to be perfect. It was not only what I was expected to do, but also what I could not do that shaped me.

In addition to keeping the house in order, I was expected to get A's or my mother gave me a very strong talking to about failure, which was not acceptable. Even though

neither of my parents attended college and my brothers were not expected to go to college, it was made clear to me at an early age that I was expected to attend college. All three of my brothers joined the military: the Army Paratroopers, the Navy, and the Army Infantry. These were perfectly acceptable positions for my brothers but when I said I wanted to join the Air Force and pilot an F-86 Sabre Jet, I was quickly discouraged. Gender shaped this experience; I did not realize until much later that, at that time, women were not accepted as Air Force pilots.

After all these years, I still question the gift in these challenges. Perfectionism has its drawbacks. Even as a young woman, I sought the approval of my parents. It was not until I was grown and had children of my own that I realized how hard it is on children to have such high expectations of never having a grade lower than an A. I learned instead to ask my children if they had done the best they could. Most of the time they were honest, and if they said they had not done their best I told them that was not acceptable and to try harder. In spite of my efforts to soften my parenting style, my children have told me that I was very strict and sometimes had unreasonable expectations of them. I am sure that this is a result of my upbringing. I had a high profile position at one time and my daughters tell me that I had the same expectations of them that my parents had of me: do not do anything to embarrass me. They told me that it was hard to live this way, but that they understood since in that situation we were the only Black family in the communities in which we lived. Maybe the best thing I learned from trying to be perfect is not to give up. I have learned not to expect others to be perfect, but I am still very demanding of myself.

My military upbringing has shaped who I am. I am Black but I do not talk about it. I have always done what needs to be done because my family and the military

expected that of me. My parents told me to never use the fact that I am Black as an excuse for not succeeding. As there is not much research on this topic, I do not know if my experiences are unique or if others share my experiences, and this has shaped my research interests. I wonder what challenges and benefits other Black daughters of military families face. What are their challenges and how do they face them? What benefits do they attribute to life in the military? One of my questions is how many of these challenges and benefits are related to racial identity and how many are part of the experience of military families in general.

Our country will continue to have military service members serving all over the world for some time, whether in peace or in war, and their families will continue to share the experiences of this service. My overarching interest in this short and long-term research is to understand the role social workers and health care professionals play in supporting members of military families who are responding to the pressures, and to anticipate how our fields can more effectively and deliberately prepare for the current and future needs of this population. This work, of course, will be built on the successes and limits of those who have come before me.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

### **Review of Relevant Literature Regarding Military Families**

For many years, the only authoritative work available to social workers about the military was *Social Work Practice in the Military* edited by Daley (1999). Still a good introduction to the various service branches and the variations of culture between them, this book provided a view from inside the military and answered questions from the perspective of each service branch individually. In this study, some of these specific details have been combined into generalities about the military as a whole.

In addition to Daley's research-based work, firsthand accounts of the lives of the children of military families can be found in M.E. Wertsch's *Military Brats: Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress* (1991), and *The Great Santini* (Conroy, 1976), a novel written by a son in the military. In addition to this general literature, this research also drew on contemporary material specific to deployment and combat, and the impact of deployment and combat, on those serving in the military and veterans of the service (Adler, Bliese, & Castro, 2011; Cozza, 2011; Cozza, Goldenberg, Ursano, & American Psychiatric Association., 2014; Gorman, Blow, Ames, & Reed, 2011; Jacobson et al., 2008; Kelley & Jouriles, 2011; Kilgore et al., 2008; MacDermid & Riggs, 2011; Marvasti, 2012; McFarlane, 2009; Moore, 2012; Park, 2011). I begin with a general review of military family culture.

### **Military Family Culture**

A definition of military culture is the "values, beliefs, traditions, norms, perceptions, and behaviors that govern how members of the armed forces think, communicate, and interact with one another and with the outside world" (Exum, Coll, &



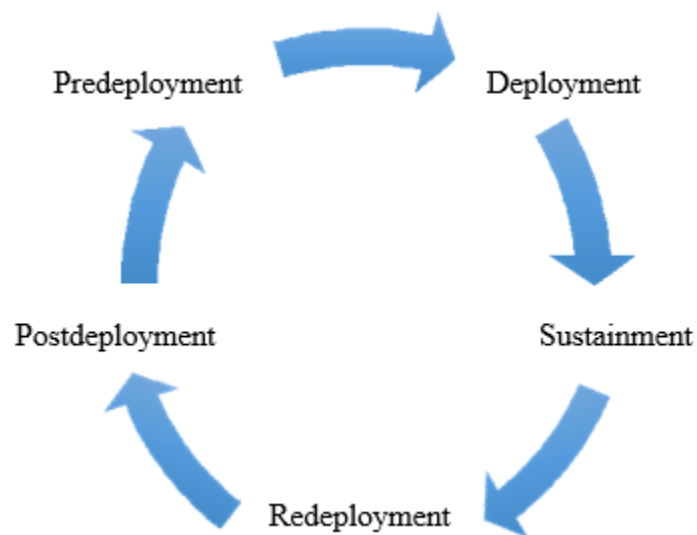
Weiss, 2011, p. 21). Cox (1999) states that it is the nature of military culture to change rapidly and that these changes have profound effects on service members and their families. Adjusting to rapid changes can be upsetting, leaving those involved in the changes little time to make plans for impacts in their lives. The changes noted by Cox (1999), which others might think of as situational changes, include simultaneous multiple combat zones, rapid and multiple deployments among regular service personnel, as well as Selected Reserves and state National Guard troops. These changes bring the American public into the lives of military families more often now than previously because of the inclusion of members of the Ready Reserves and National Guard members, who are often neighbors and friends and include many people in a small area as de facto extended family members (Blaisure et al., 2012; Coll, Weiss, & Metal, 2013).

These changes introduce a tension between the “fortress” culture of the military—keeping service members and their families inside and everyone else outside (Wertsch, 1991)—and the increased military-civilian interaction. The “fortress” is the subculture of the military separate from civilian life, or those not in the military. The “fortress” has a rigid structure, is authoritarian, has its occupants move frequently, and shares an isolation and alienation apart from those not part of the military. The sense of “fortress” is that those in the military are inside living a different life from those outside (Wertsch, 1991). Salient to this research is that the military cocoon can be protective but can also prevent those inside the fortress from reaching outside for assistance when needed. One of the reasons for this difficulty is that military readiness includes the family being ready at all times (Biank, 2006; Blaisure et al., 2012; Coll et al., 2013; Daley, 1999). If there are

problems within the family, the military considers the service member unprepared (Cox, 1999).

### **Cycle of Deployment**

The Cycle of Deployment consists of stages the military service members and their families go through when the service member is deployed or sent to serve away from the family: pre-deployment or mobilization and training periods, actual deployment, sustainment, redeployment or returning, and post-deployment or reintegration or reunion (Franklin, 2013). Figure 1 shows that the deployment cycle is a recurring cycle. Because of the military structure, eventually the service member and their family will re-enter or continue this cycle.



*Figure 1: The Stages of the Cycle of Deployment (Franklin, 2013, p. 317)*

Though the current Cycle of Deployment states that those deployed service members will return stateside for at least the same amount of time they were deployed, this does not always happen. “I was deployed 12 months and home only 10 months

before leaving again. Some of my friends who were sent to different companies went back in less than 6 months” (A. Bieber, Army Sergeant, personal communication, 2015).

While the service members are deployed, they are separated from their families. Military families do generally show high levels of resilience, but deployments present special challenges to the military service member preparing or returning from deployment, to the spouse remaining at home during deployment, and to the family’s children (Gibbs, Marlin, Kupper, & Johnson, 2007). Many reports have been written about the effects of deployment on service members but the effects of deployment and reintegration on family members are just beginning to be explored in more detail (Franklin, 2013; Leskin, Garcia, D’Amico, Mogh, & Lester, 2013; Paris, DeVoe, Ross, & Acker, 2010; Pincus, House, Christensen, & Adler, 2011).

Initial findings suggest the stress of deployment creates challenges for family members as well as service members. “Separation can lead to clinically significant levels of anxiety and other mental health challenges” for the spouse or significant other and numerous separation stressors for the children (Leskin et al., 2013, p. 430). For spouses or significant others, the tasks of running a single-parent household might become overwhelming (Franklin, 2013; Pincus et al., 2011). Many military families do not live close to their support groups during deployments and so do not have the relief and back up support that many non-military or civilian families have available (Franklin, 2013; Pincus et al., 2011). Children pick up the feelings of stress and anxiety of the remaining parent (Franklin, 2013; Pincus et al., 2011).

A 2005 study by the National Military Families Association looked at family responses to previous, but similar stages of deployment (National Military Family

Association, 2005). These findings included that: communication among service members, families, the unit/command, and family support providers was essential during the separation of deployment and the preparation for the reunion with the service member; the day-to-day operational tempo (OTEMPO) took a toll on service members' families; and continuous training of support providers was needed and should extend into the post-deployment stage.

Participants in this study also reported whether or not they felt stress during each stage of deployment. Fifteen percent (15%) experienced stress upon notification of impending deployment, 18% upon the service members' departure, 25% in the beginning of the deployment, 29% in the middle of the deployment, and 8% at the end of the deployment (National Military Family Association, 2005).

Eaton et al., (2008) studied mental health problems in the spouses of deployed service members. Although military resources are available, of those spouses who sought help from a mental health professional, only 4.7% sought help from a military mental health professional compared to 11.1% who sought help from a civilian mental health professional.

Among those who screened positive for major depression or generalized anxiety disorders (using the DSM-IV-TR definitions), access to care, and stigma were the primary barriers to treatment (Eaton et al., 2008). Specifically, barriers to care included: the spouse did not know where to get help (20.6%); it was difficult to schedule an appointment (26.0%); it would be difficult getting time off from work or child care was a problem (43.1%); and, mental health care costs too much money (26.0%; Eaton et al., 2008). These reasons were given even though the military states that it advertises the

available resources in many convenient places and that appointment schedules are made available at convenient times, including evenings and weekends (U.S. Department of Defense, 2014).

The stigma issues included: it would be too embarrassing (20.5%); it would harm the spouse's career (20.5%); and, it would be seen as weakness (22.4%; Eaton et al., 2008). Another study by Warner et al. states that 28.5% of respondents felt that their own mental health treatment could have a negative impact on the spouse's career (Warner, Appenzeller, Warner, & Grieger, 2009). The respondents were spouses of service members. The military has spent a great deal of time trying to remove stigma as a reason for not receiving needed services (Foster, 1982).

According to Franklin (2013), because of the need for retention of service members and the recognition that remaining in the military has become a family decision, the military has established a number of resources to assist families during the various stages of deployment. Studies are just beginning to be written about these resources available to military families. Most of these include information about the types of resources available but not how often those resources are used. According to Blaisure et al. (2012), there are three types of resources intended to increase military families' easy access to information; these are military family assistance centers, Military HOMEFRONT, and Military OneSource.

Each branch of the military service has a family assistance or resource center (Blaisure et al., 2012). Military service members and their families can find information on resources in these centers, and family center programs can include counseling and crisis assistance, deployment support, family advocacy programs, financial counseling,

employment assistance, referrals on other resources, parenting, stress management, life skills education, and other similar services (Blaisure et al., 2012). Military HOMEFRONT and Military OneSource offer similar services online.

If the needs of the country dictate military escalation in the future, consideration of the toll on the service members and their families during the Cycle of Deployment is important. Social workers should have enough knowledge and training in the internal systems of military family culture to be able to recommend and provide resources to military families before, during, and after deployment.

While normal operations of the military include having a service member live and work in areas of war apart from the family for some length of time, this method of living extended separations increased during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq because there were not enough service members trained when needed and because there was more than one area where service members were needed concurrently. Living apart from family more frequently due to extended or multiple deployments became an additional and ongoing source of stress for the service members and for their families. Some of the consequences of extended or multiple deployments include difficulty with interpersonal relationships, problems with intimacy, increased instances of domestic violence, sleep problems, emotional numbing, lower marital relationship happiness, posttraumatic stress that also spills over to the spouse and children, increased divorces, suicides, and child abuse that can include physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect (Franklin, 2013). There are many challenges to military families in general. When you add the global pressures faced by Black women, these challenges can intensify for this population.

## **Review of Relevant Literature Regarding Black Women's Culture**

I began this discussion of Black women's culture with a look at racial identification of Blacks or African Americans. Next, we looked at some of the relevant identities of women within this race, including what is sometimes called the "Strong Black Woman." I conclude this section with a look at what women raised within Black women's culture bring to military family culture. Of particular interest in this discussion is Daley's description of the military as a separate "ethnic identity", observing that people who serve in the military often come to identify that service as a "core component of who they are" (Daley, 1999, p. 291), a quality this identification shares with ethnicity and race.

### **Black Racial Identity**

It is important first to define the terms "Black" and "African American" as used in this section of this paper. Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous (1998) give the following definition:

We purposefully make a distinction in our usage of the terms *Black* and *African American*. The term *Black* is used as an ambiguous category that may or may not be inclusive of all persons of African descent, depending upon the individual's viewpoint. Some African Americans conceptualize the Black reference group as a group that is made up of African Americans only. Other African Americans may hold a more Pan-African view of the Black reference group, in which anyone of African descent is considered to be Black. Thus, we use the term *Black* when referring to the individuals' own phenomenological view of the make-up of their reference group. In contrast, we use the term *African American* to refer to those individuals of African descent who have received a significant portion of their socialization in the United States. Thus, the term *African American* is culturally bound to a group of people within the context of American society. (p. 19)

As you can see by this definition of the terms *Black* and *African American* there is not one identity or agreement on what it means to be Black. Additionally, there are

multiple ways to approach research on Black racial identity. Horowitz (as cited in Sellers et al., 1998, p. 19) views Black racial identity within the context of a group-stigmatized status with little regard for culture within the group. Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) call this the *mainstream approach*. This approach focuses on universal aspects of group identity. The second approach researches Black racial identity with specific emphasis on the unique oppression and cultural experiences of this group. Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) called this the underground approach. Although Gaines and Reed coined the terms “mainstream” and “underground”, mainstream research traces its roots to Allport (1954) and underground research traces its roots to Du Bois (as cited in Sellers et al., 1998).

My orientation in this study is to recognize that the life experiences of Black people provide the lens through which to view how their lives have evolved and each individual situation presents challenges to overcome and successes to be had. Based on the above definitions, the racial term most appropriate for this work is Black, and the theoretical perspective that best describes my approach is the underground approach. Within the Black experience, the focus of this study is Black women and how their experiences as Black women prepare them to live within military culture. The Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI; Sellers et al., 1998) is relevant to understanding Black women’s culture and identity.

### **Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)**

The MMRI represents a combination of existing theories on group identity that includes historical and cultural experience that make racial identity “a unique form of group identity for African Americans” (Sellers et al., 1998, p. 23). The MMRI defines racial identity in African Americans as “the significance and qualitative meaning that



individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concept” (Sellers et al., 1998, p. 23). This definition points to how important race is to the individual’s self-perception and what it means to be a member of the racial group (Sellers et al., 1998).

There are four assumptions in the MMRI. The first is that identities are situationally influenced and that identities are stable properties of the person (Sellers et al., 1998). Markus and Kunda (1986) and Stryker and Serpe (1982, 1994) also hold that identity has both situational and stable properties. Specifically, racial identity in Blacks has dynamic properties that follow contextual cues and permit stable properties of the identity to influence behavior for a specific event. The stable qualities of racial identity can change gradually through one’s life because of cumulative influence of the social environment and possible developmental forces (Markus & Kunda, 1986; Sellers et al., 1998; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1994).

The second assumption is that individuals have several hierarchically ordered and different identities (Markus & Sentis, 1982; McCall & Simmons, 1978; McCrae & Costa, 1988; Rosenberg, 1979; Sellers et al., 1998; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1994). The relative importance of race compared to the other self-identities, such as gender, can have important implications for a person (Sellers et al., 1998). A woman for whom both race and gender are important to her self-identity is more likely to include gender in her self-conceptualization of what it means to be Black than a woman for whom gender is not important (Sellers et al., 1998). For example, a Black woman who works with other women might not see gender as being important when she describes herself because she is with women on a daily basis. A Black woman who works only with men or with few

other women would need to state that she is a Black woman when giving a self-description.

A third assumption is that an individual's self-perception of racial identity is the most valid part of their self-identity (Sellers et al., 1998). An individual's self-perception of the significance of their own race is more important in self-reporting than in overt behavior; however, overt behavior can be constrained by situational factors (Sellers et al., 1998; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). For women in military families, the situational factor of being part of a military family sometimes led the children to not recognize they were Black. Race was not emphasized in the military. However, these children were made aware of their race when they were around other Black families, especially outside the Fortress. For these children, racial identity was not the most valid part of their self-identity.

The final assumption concerns an individual's racial identity rather than the development of that identity (Sellers et al., 1998). An individual's emphasis on racial identity or the significance of an individual's racial identity is likely to change during their life according to their social context (Sellers et al., 1998). The self-described racial identity of a Black girl of eight years old will probably not be the same as a young Black woman of 18 years of age or a Black woman of 30 or 40.

### **Black Women**

The foundation of the MMRI includes four dimensions of racial identity. These dimensions are: racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group, and the ideology associated with the identity (Sellers et al., 1998). Racial salience is "the extent to which one's race is a relevant part of one's self-

concept as a particular moment or in a particular situation” (1998, p. 24). Racial centrality is: “the extent to which a person normatively defines himself or herself with regard to race” (1998, p. 25). Centrality is relatively stable across situations. Racial regard is a “person’s affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race in terms of positive-negative valence” (1998, p. 26). Ideology is “the individual’s beliefs, opinions, and attitudes with respect to the way she or he feels that the members of the race should act” (1998, p. 27). This dimension represents the person’s philosophy about the ways in which African Americans should live and interact with society (Sellers, 1998, p. 27).

It is this last dimension of racial identity, ideology, that I want to integrate into my understanding of Black women’s’ culture. Sellers et al. (1998) present four ideological philosophies: nationalist philosophy, an oppressed minority philosophy, a humanist philosophy, and an assimilation philosophy.

A nationalist philosophy “stresses the uniqueness of being Black” (Sellers et al., 1998, p. 27). Using a nationalist lens, being African American is different from any other group and African Americans should be in control of their identity with little input from other groups. This philosophical viewpoint is one of “Say it loud, I’m Black and I’m proud”. Collins (2009) and Lorde (1984, 2009) go further to say only Black women can identify themselves. In fact, they both argue that each Black woman is the only person who can define what it means to be “Black” for herself.

The oppressed minority philosophy underscores the similarities between the oppression that African Americans and others groups face and points out the shared intersections with other groups. African Americans in this group are very aware of oppression of African Americans but also recognize that other groups are oppressed

(Sellers et al., 1998). As an example of intersections, Collins and Bilge (2017) argue that you cannot separate the effects of oppression from being Black from that of being a woman. Even though a Black woman can recognize when others are being oppressed, the uniqueness of being a Black woman gives her another lens. Collins (2009) and Lorde (1984) argue that it is not enough to recognize that other groups also face oppression and encourage Black women to become allies with others who suffer oppression.

The humanist philosophy stresses similarities among all humans. Individuals with this outlook do not see race, gender, class or other differences among peoples. They consider that all people belong to the human race (Sellers et al., 1998). Black women recognize that all people are human but also recognize that different individuals are treated differently (Collins, 2009).

Those individuals with the final philosophy, assimilationist, look at the similarities between African Americans and the rest of society (Sellers et al., 1998). An individual with this viewpoint looks upon themselves as an American and tries to enter mainstream America (Sellers et al., 1998). An individual with this perspective does not deny racism, or the importance of being an African American. This individual can advocate for social change, but works within the system to change it. Individuals with this philosophy also think it is important to socialize with White people (Sellers et al., 1998).

The self-identity of Black women within military culture will be the focus of this study. Do these women identify as a nationalist, an oppressed person, a humanist, an assimilationist, all of the above, none of the above? Do Black women within military

culture believe, as Collins (2009) and Lorde (1984 2009), that they are uniquely a part of everything around them, and cannot be identified by anyone other than themselves?

### **The “Strong Black Woman”**

An important characteristic of Black women’s culture in adapting well to military culture is self-sacrifice, the ability to put the needs and concerns for others before self. This sometimes becomes the stereotype of the Strong Black Woman. This trait may have developed during slavery and segregation when Black women had to simultaneously care for the needs of their white owners and employers, the owners and employers’ families while at the same time caring for the needs of their own families and households, if permitted one while enslaved (Holmes, Mills, Mickel, 2011). Their own needs came last. hooks (1984) states that this notion of the “Strong Black Women” is not a compliment but is yet another a form of oppression. It was not a lack of intelligence, talent or humanity that put them in this subservient role, it was (and is) racism (Collins, 2003).

An individual’s life course is shaped by the people in the environment as well as that individual’s environment (Holmes, White, Mills, & Mickel, 2011). Although Black culture has evolved to include this notion of the Strong Black Woman, it has also expanded the archetype to sometimes, idealize Black female strength, independence, competency, and self-reliance (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). That said, the idea of a Strong Black Woman generally limits, rather than empowers, Black women (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). This limitation is perpetuation of a social construction that de-emphasizes daily struggles and society’s inequities (Holmes et al., 2011).

Holmes et al. (2011) argues that the Strong Black Woman learns to suppress her own feelings and desires to accommodate the needs of others. The “ability to express

genuine fear, hurt, and inadequacies is lacking” (Holmes et al., 2011, p. 74). Being a Strong Black Woman means the tireless support of others even if it means neglecting one’s self. This cultural expectation creates a need to fulfill others unrealistic ideals without receiving compassion or understanding in return (Holmes et al., 2011).

The need to show strength creates a disconnect between the Black woman and those around her, and is often defined by male privilege or role identification and female sacrifice (Holmes et al., 2011). Collins (2009) speaks of a both/and relationship between Black men and Black women. As Black men suffer oppression and other challenges, Black women feel it necessary to support these men, without support reciprocated. A male-centered family structure requires that women provide unconditional support to the boys and men of a family. Strong Black Women do not feel they have the luxury of failure, though other women in a male-centered family are emotionally supported when they fail (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Holmes et al., 2011).

The roles we each play in life are an important way of understanding the human experience. These roles are how we appear to other people, both in how we choose to present ourselves and how people choose to see us (Goffman, 1959). Within the roles that we play, we have secrets (Goffman, 1959). There are three types of secrets described by Goffman that are relevant to maintaining solidarity within groups such as families. The secrets are *dark* secrets, *strategic* secrets, and *inside* secrets.

Dark secrets are facts about a group that the group knows and hides. The group uses these secrets to protect their good image in the eyes of people outside the group. We hide our weaknesses, in part, so outsiders do not think less of us (Goffman, 1959). Strategic secrets are intentions and capacities of a group that are hidden from people

outside the group so those on the outside cannot adapt to the workings of the group (1959). Only the group knows inside secrets and help the group maintain a separate identity (Goffman, 1959).

Secrets are critical to maintaining an image as a Strong Black Woman. All three types of secrets are necessary to maintain and project the image of being a Strong Black Woman. An example of a dark secret that is relevant to Black women could be the gender bias Black women have to manage but cannot challenge because of the cost to the overall group if they criticize Black men. A strategic secret could be concealing one's true level of intelligence in majority white situations as to not draw unwanted attention. An inside secret could be that Strong Black Women "fall apart" in private (sanctioned or not), but cannot afford to show this to the world at large. It remains an open question if, or when a Black woman is not strong, the perception that she is weak is a self-perception, stigma, or a societal view of stigma (Goffman, 1963; Weiss et al., 2006). This keeping of secrets is compounded for women (of all races) in military culture, where families are required to wear masks and hide secrets.

Wertsch (1991), in *Military Brats: Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress*, writes of a military brat who says: "Life in the military is about fronts. Appearances. Masks. The stage persona. That's an important part of military life. Our parents were always obsessively concerned about how things looked. When we were growing up, every aspect of personal and private life was a measure of our fathers' professional competence." (Wertsch, 1991, p. 1) Daley (1999) writes that self-control is expected in the military, including that "image embraces all aspects of life" (Daley, 1999, p. 293).

This mirrors the identity, assimilation philosophy, and keeping secrets previously described for life within Black women's culture.

This intersection of experience between Black women's culture and military culture seems likely to include a rich overlap of rules about secrets, image, and prioritizing the need of others over one's own. One of the questions that led to this research is: Are the experiences of Black women who are members of military families similar to that of the Strong Black Woman?

### **Black Women as Family in the Military**

There is not much research to build on in investigating this question. There is very little information on Black women in military families in the literature. An EBSCO database search for Black women in military families gives no results. A survey by the National Military Families Association on the effects of deployment did not give demographics by race so it is unknown how many Black women participated in the study (National Military Family Association, 2005). The RAND study of military families that led to the creation of a new tool to assess the needs of military families did not include participant racial demographics (Miller et al., 2011a). A RAND brief that showed that military families have problems, such as lack of childcare or expensive childcare, concern with mental health issues, and concerns about relocation, also did not give demographics (Miller et al., 2011b). No explanation was given for the lack of demographics in either report.

Though we lack information about the demographic make-up in the above studies, a study of veterans for the Veterans' Administration showed that white veterans were much more likely than Black or other races to be included in their studies (Seal et al.,



2009). It is unknown if this was because participants were not asked or because they chose not to participate. Many research surveys acknowledge difficulty in getting information from minority groups, and most research professionals recognize the reluctance of minorities to become involved in research projects (Eaton et al., 2008; Franklin, 2013; Hoge et al., 2004). If Black veterans are participating in major studies in fewer numbers than white veterans are, it is possible that Black women family members are also not participating in studies. Some of this resistance of Black people to participate in research studies might be traceable to a history of exploitation in medical research, such as the Tuskegee Studies, which deliberately left Blacks infected with syphilis to learn about the course of the disease, even after a cure became available (Head, Antoine, Williams, Edwards, & Sinclair-Willis, 2017).

While evidence of what motivates Black women who are part of military families is lacking, there is some information in Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) theory regarding possible sources of strength during challenges. These include resilience and posttraumatic growth. Resilience is defined by Greene as “development of clusters of self-protective behaviors and strengths” (Greene, 2012, p. 44). This is an HBSE theory. It is possible that in a self-protective environment, Black women develop behaviors and strengths that allow them to overcome challenges. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) coined the term “posttraumatic growth” to mean “positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging circumstances” (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p. 1). Considering the daily challenges of being a Black woman and the success that many Black women achieve, this relatively new area of posttraumatic growth is worth investigating further especially since there are many studies on

posttraumatic stress disorder in military families. These areas, as well as others, are possible future research topics emerging from this study.

### **Critical Review of Theories Applicable to Military Family Culture and Black Women's Culture**

Because we are looking at Black women culture and military family culture, we must consider several theories for these groups. I have chosen these theories after the Literature Review because I think the theories might apply to the study topic. Later, in the Discussion Chapter, I will review if these theories did, in fact, apply based on the interviews conducted for this study.

#### **Intersectionality.**

Collins and Bilge (2017) posit that a person is not shaped by just one factor. To study the complexities of a person, all axes must be considered. For Black women who are a part of a military family, we must consider all the issues faced by that woman as a woman, as a Black woman, and as a member of a military family. If all axes are not considered, there will not be a full study of the factors that converge to form her identity. Lorde (1984) also argues for intersectionality in studying Black women. She calls for looking at differences in race, class, sexuality, age, and power as the only way to study Black women's culture.

#### **Goffman – Identity and Stigma.**

As discussed above, Goffman's (1963) concepts of roles and secrets have bearing in an examination of the lives of Black women in military families. Additionally, Goffman (1963) presents a person's view of themselves as based on what an individual thinks is

due everyone else in the same social category. Goffman (1963) further presents the view from the individual:

[T]he standards they have incorporated from the wider society equip them to be intimately alive to what others see as their failing, inevitably causing them, if only for moments, to agree that they do indeed fall short of what they really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility. (p. 7)

### **Systems Theory and Resilience, Adaptability, and Transformability.**

Systems Theory is very relevant for the military. Within the military, obedience to hierarchal authority is important to achieving the mission(s) of the military branches (Coll et al., 2013; Daley, 1999). Burke (2004) explains how the transition from civilian to service member takes place: “[B]asic training takes recruits from all backgrounds and all regions of the country and through debasement, discipline, simulated chaos, and sleep deprivation suppresses individuality in order to forge a new, corporate identity” (p. xiv).

Whereas the adherence to strict rules and regulations might cause chaos and disharmony in other systems, within the military it is understood that not obeying orders and/or regulations might cause the death of the service member or his/her fellow service members (Blaisure et al., 2012; Coll et al., 2013; Daley, 1999). Burke (2004) describes all of military life as significant. Historically, each detail is efficient and disciplined with the purpose of historically transforming boys into men.

People manage to survive and even thrive in complex systems by having resilience, adaptability, and the ability to transform themselves when necessary (Folke et al., 2010). Resilience can take on many forms including being able to continually change but remain within acceptable thresholds. Adaptability is being able to adjust to external forces and internal processes and allow for developing along the set path.

Transformability is being able to change when necessary in order to meet new challenges (Folke et al., 2010).

Being able to adapt to the stress of obedience and loyalty over other values can be important both within military culture and within family culture (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). Being able to adapt can be in conflict with whether or not women should have to adapt when expected or if women should insist on their rightful place and not adapt (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984).

### **Feminist Theories.**

Liberal feminism, also called gradualism by Rojck, Peacock, and Collins (1989) looks at inequalities in opportunities for women. The inequality is usually seen as a lack of equality between men and women, especially in the workplace. This view looks at sex, in this case gender differences, and how those differences become cultural assumptions. The recommended efforts to correct the misconceptions of gender differences are by legislation, changing social conventions, and educating children so that these views do not continue (Dominelli, 2002; Reynolds, 1993; Rojck et al., 1989). The military, until recently, withheld certain positions within the military from women. Women could not officially apply for these positions, including combat positions, because they were not allowed to be in combat zones where they might be in danger of injury or death. This idea that women outside of these positions are not in danger is contradicted by the stories of many female veterans (Benedict, 2009; Desnoyers-Colas, 2014; Latty, 2004). Burke (2004) acknowledges that most of what we know about the lives of women within military culture is from first-person accounts. This can be a positive or negative approach to studying women within military culture depending on how the study is conducted.

First-person accounts are always from the viewpoint of the study participant. The researcher must follow protocols closely and be transparent in the reporting.

Radical feminism, called separatism by Rojck et al. (1989), focuses on patriarchy (Dominelli, 2002; Reynolds, 1993), a system characterized by men's power and privilege. Radical feminism celebrates the differences between the genders and promotes separate women's structures within existing groups and women's own social groups (Dominelli, 2002; Reynolds, 1993). This study will see if woman in the military had their own social groups and if the differences between the genders are promoted.

Socialist or Marxist feminism, called activism by Rojck et al. (1989), emphasizes women's oppression within a class-based unequal system (Dominelli, 2002; Rojck et al., 1989). This view of feminism recognizes that women are important because they are the child bearers of the future workforce -- important for childcare and taking care of the home (Dominelli, 2002; Reynolds, 1993; Rojck et al., 1989). Socialist feminism acknowledges that oppression of women can interact with other forms of oppression such as race and disability and that these areas should be studied to find out how diverse interests can be shared (Dominelli, 2002; Reynolds, 1993; Rojck et al., 1989)

hooks (1984) argues that using the phrase "all women are oppressed" is unfair to women and maintained that there is enough diversity of women that class, race, religion, sexual preferences, and similar factors help to determine the extent to which sexism will influence the lives of women. There is opposition to White feminists who act as if Black women did not know sexist oppression existed until White women started the "movement" (hooks, 1984). Black women and other minority women who live in oppressive situations understand about patriarchal politics from their "lived experience"

(hooks, 1984, p. 10). These women have developed methods of resistance. hooks did not use the term, but perhaps this was Black feminism.

Lorde (2009) contended that Black women who write about other Black women must be especially careful to consider all the aspects of a woman's life from that woman's point of view and not from the viewpoint established by those in power. She also asserted that acknowledging differences is important. It is in working through differences that relationships are built. Tolerance is not acceptable. Interdependency between women should be encouraged as a way to freedom (Lorde, 1984, 2009). Collins (2009) also addressed the need to let Black women speak for themselves. The lens of those in power, the lens of other women, the lens of Black people, and the lens of other Black women should not be the lens of a researcher. Let the Black women speak for themselves (Collins, 2009). The researcher must be careful to let the Black women speak for themselves and not presume to speak for the study participants.

### **Womanism.**

Womanism is a philosophy and a consciousness that concurrently addresses racism while it attends to sexism in the Black community and the culture at large. Womanism focuses on racial, cultural, sexual, economic, and political matters (Brown, 1990). Womanism uses racial consciousness to underscore the positive aspects of being Black (Ogunyemi, 1985). It is exemplified in Sojourner Truth's 1851 question, "Ain't I a woman?" (Halsall, 1997), and Black women continue to ask this question today. Many Black women identify as womanists rather than feminists (Collins, 2009). Womanism is not merely a political theory with a social agenda. Womanism attempts to

get Black women to think about their community at large. It fosters a belief in social and personal change for each person and in each culture using racial consciousness.

### **Critical Race Theory.**

Critical Race Theory started in the legal profession as a discourse on “race relations” (Peller, 1995). After affirmative action and other legal standards improved relations between majority and minority races, some legal scholars began to think that the main issues of unfairness toward minorities were getting lost. Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas (1995) proposed that Critical Race Theory,

...aims to reexamine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness, and to recover and revitalize the radical tradition of race-consciousness among African-Americans and other peoples of color – a tradition that was discarded when integration, assimilation, and the ideal of colorblindness became the official norms of racial enlightenment. (p. xiv)

### **Shame Resilience Theory (SRT).**

This theory, developed by Brown (2006), separates feelings of shame from feelings of guilt. Shame is described as “an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging” (Brown, 2006, p. 45), while guilt is described as a feeling that results from behaving in a bad way and is not a feeling of a flawed self (2006). Shame Resilience Theory (SRT) is relevant to both military family culture and Black women culture because it is a psycho-social-cultural construct with the psychological component relating to emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of self, i.e. how the person in the military family or Black woman feels about herself. The social component relates to how the individual experiences shame in relationships and connections, i.e. how the person in the military family or Black woman feels about bringing shame on the military family or her own Black family. The cultural

component relates to how cultural expectations, shame, and real or perceived failure of meeting cultural expectations can impact a woman in a military family or in a Black family. SRT further proposes that feelings of shame can be enforced by individuals and groups and supported by media. This reinforcement of feelings of shame from outside can cause an individual to assimilate these feelings.

Women experiencing shame try to decrease feelings of being trapped, powerless, and isolated and try to increase a sense of connection, power, and freedom. Shame resilience is this effort to decrease shame by experiencing the more positive emotions. Connecting to our authentic selves, having meaningful relationships with others, and moving towards empathy are methods of showing shame resilience (Brown, 2006)

### **The Use of Intersectionality, Systems Theory, Resilience, Adaptability, and Transformability.**

Goffman's theories on identity and self; various forms of Feminist Theories, Womanism, Critical Race Theory, and Shame Resilience Theory can serve as the basis for looking at commonalities between military family culture and Black women culture. There are commonalities on views of identity and self, power or lack thereof, perhaps hidden feminism within both cultures, the potential for self-shame and group stigma and shame, and the role and needs of the family as an individual grows and develops within the military family and as a woman develops within a Black family. For this study, I used Collin's and Bilge (2017) and Lorde's (1984) views on Intersectionality and Collin's (2009), hooks' (1984), and Lorde's (2009) views on Black Feminism. Intersectionality was used because all forces in a women's life impact her. hooks and Lorde's views on Black Feminism were included because no pre-defined description of the women



interviewed was used. The Black women in this study defined themselves. Their words and experiences revealed their view of themselves.

### **Research Considerations**

Creswell (2013, 2014), as well as instruction by professors in doctoral coursework at the Indiana University School of Social Work, laid a strategy of letting the research question dictate the methodology. In addition, Creswell (2014) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2011) direct a researcher to choose a method that identifies with the researcher's philosophical underpinnings and paradigms.

According to Padgett (2008), there are some simple ways to determine if the research method should be qualitative rather than quantitative. These “common denominators” are: insider rather than outsider perspectives; person-centered rather than variable-centered; holistic rather than particularistic; contextual rather than decontextual; and depth rather than breadth (p. 2). I had an insider rather than an outsider perspective on this topic because of my various roles as daughter, sister, spouse, and mother-in-law to service members in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. The topic of this research did not have a base of knowledge on which to ask specific questions to test for results. I could not write a scientific report as described by Creswell (2013). I could not identify variables and test those variables on an instrument (Creswell, 2014), therefore it would have been problematic to have quantitative data and analyze it. The basis of this research was the stories of Black American women who were raised or lived in a predominantly military family culture, therefore Padgett's “common denominators” fit well for finding the stories of these women.

There are many qualitative research methods that could have been considered for this research. Case studies, life history, narrative research, phenomenology, and grounded theory research are methods that were considered. Because information specifically on Black women daughters who are part of military families is lacking, any of these methods could be effective in learning new information about these women and how they are able to function within military culture.

In view of the questions I wanted to ask and the answers sought from this study, I looked at the information from Morse (1994, p. 224) included in Table 1. I considered the following:

*Table 1: Morse Questions for Qualitative Research (Morse, 1994, p. 224)*

<b><u>Type of research questions</u></b>	<b><u>Strategy</u></b>	<b><u>Paradigm</u></b>	<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Other Data Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Major References</u></b>
Meaning questions — eliciting the essence of experiences	Phenomenology	Philosophy (phenomenology)	Audiotaped “conversation”, written anecdotes of personal experiences	Phenomenological literature, philosophical reflections, poetry, art	Bergum (1991), Giorgi (1970), Van Manen (1984, 1990)
Descriptive questions—of values, beliefs, practices of cultural group-	Ethnography	Anthropology (culture)	Unstructured interviews, participant observation, field notes	Documents, records; Photography; maps, genealogies; social network diagrams	Ellen (1984), Fetterman (1989), Grant & Fine, (1992), Hammersley & Atkinson (1983), Hughes (1992), Sanjek (1990), Spradley (1979), Werner & Schoepfle (1987a, 1987b)

“Process” questions - experience over time or change, may have stages and phases	Grounded theory	Sociology (symbolic interactionism)	Interviews (tape-recorded)	Participant observations; memoing; diary	Chentz & Swanson (1986), Glaser (1978, 1992), Glaser & Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987), Strauss & Corbin (1990)
Questions regarding verbal interaction and dialogue	Ethnomethodology, discourse analysis	Semiotics	Dialogue (audio/video recording)	Observation; field notes	Atkinson (1992), Benson & Hughes (1983), /’debsub (1970, 1989), Douglas (1970), Heritage (1984), Leiter (1980), Rogers (1983)
Behavioral questions Macro Micro	Participant observation  Qualitative ethnology	Anthropology Zoology	Observation ; field notes observation	Interviews , photography Videotaped, note taking	Jorgensen (1989), Spradley (1980), Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989), Morse & Bottorff (1990), Scherer & Ekman (1982)

I narrowed the research lens from the spouses, mothers, significant others, sisters, and daughters because the subject area was new and including all these women would be too broad for an initial study. The chosen topic for this research study was Black daughters who are/were part of military families. Because it was a relatively unexplored topic, I chose Qualitative Description as described by Sandelowski (2000, 2010) as the research method.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study used the Qualitative Description method as described by Sandelowski (2000, 2010). Qualitative Description is used to obtain “straight and largely unadorned (i.e. minimally theorized or otherwise transformed or spun) answers to questions of special relevance to practitioners and policy makers” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337). Qualitative Descriptive studies offer a comprehensive summary of events in everyday language rather than a conceptual rendering of the data (Sandelowski, 2000). While some interpretation is needed to develop the summary, I used low-inference analyses to reveal common thoughts, occurrences, and/or feelings experienced by participants and describe them in practical terms (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative studies are considered a form of naturalistic inquiry, reflecting a commitment to study things as they exist rather than based on the pre-selection and manipulation of variables based on a particular theoretical view (Sandelowski, 2000).

Purposeful sampling is often used in Qualitative Descriptive studies. Participants are chosen because they have experienced the phenomenon of interest and thus represent information-rich cases to meet the aims of the study (Sandelowski, 2000). Data collection is directed toward discovering the basic who, what, and where of events that participants have experienced. Minimally- to moderately-structured open-ended individual and/or focus group interviews are often used. Data collection can also include observations of events and the examination of documents and artifacts. Content analysis is often used in Qualitative Descriptive studies to summarize the information contained within the data (Altheide, 1987; Morgan, 1993). The expected outcome of Qualitative Descriptive

studies is a straightforward summary of the contents of data organized in a manner that best addresses the aim of the study (Sandelowski, 2000).

### **Identification of the Population and Sample**

The population for this study was Black women who grew up in military families. The military for this study was the U.S. Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, Army or Air Force Reserves, and National Guard. Women were eligible whose parent, stepparent, adopted parent, or other guardian figure was in the military services.

The sample was a purposeful, snowball sample. The sample for this study was proposed to include 10 to 15 Black women. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. The women had to be at least 18 years old,
2. Participants were at least eight years old when their parent was in the military and,
3. Their parent would have been in the military for at least five years.

I elected to interview participants who were adults so that I could have direct conversation with the participants without parental consent. This was in order to create an environment where the women felt free to share anything they wanted to share in the interview. A minimum age of eight years old at the time of their parent's military service was chosen so that the participants could remember some of their early years as a daughter in the military as well as their later years. I wanted participants whose family member had served at least two terms of service so that they had multiple experiences to draw from. I chose five years because military service was usually two years, if drafted, or three years if enlisted for one term.

## **Recruitment**

I reached out to specific individuals for the initial sample. One person I met at a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) conference in 2014 became a valuable source for this study. At that conference, I had to choose a person at random and give a short, concise explanation of my research topic. This person was interested in the research topic (at that time broadly defined as “military families”) and has maintained contact with me since the conference. The SREB colleague provided contact information for five participants for this study. I contacted a retired Air Force Major General who she met several years ago when he was the host for an invited presentation at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. This retired Major General provided contact information for three additional participants for this study. An Indiana University School of Social Work faculty member provided contact information for one participant for this study. Personal contacts provided two participants for this study. The participants are introduced individually, chronologically by age, later in Findings. The recruitment flyer is Appendix A.

## **Data Collection.**

There were three primary research questions asked of the participants about their experience: 1) What *challenges* did you experience growing up in a military family? 2) What *benefits* did you experience growing up in a military family? and, 3) Do you believe that being Black affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)?

### **Interview process.**

Initial contact was via email or text message, depending on what contact information I received from the referral source. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. Two interviews were in person. The other nine interviews were over the telephone. There were a total of 11 interviews. Interviews lasted from 35 minutes to five and a half hours. Most of the interviews lasted about an hour. Some of the participants were at their place of employment during the interview and had limited time. During the longest interview, although I tried several times to redirect, that participant wanted to talk about many issues that she felt involved the military. Only her answers to the research questions relevant to this study are included in this study. Interviews were semi-structured. I asked all the participants the same research questions, however after the first interview, I asked follow-up questions dependent on the participant's response. In the initial contact, a copy of the recruitment flyer (Appendix A) was included.

The questions were rearranged after the first interview. As originally written the questions did not flow well. I had to switch back and forth between sheets of paper during that first interview, so the study overview, informed consent, demographic information, and other general information was incorporated into the first part of the interview. The second part of the interview contained the interview questions. The third part of the interview asked the participants for advice for social workers and advice for the military for working with military families. At the beginning and the end of each interview, the participant had the opportunity to ask questions. The original interview guide is Appendix B. The original demographic guide is Appendix C. The revised questionnaire is Appendix D.

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym. This study does not use real names although several of the participants granted consent for their name to be used with their stories. The names of all siblings were also changed in order to further protect the identities of the participants. If the participants are related, the same pseudonym is used for each occurrence of that name. Part of the disclosure was to let the participant know that there would be someone transcribing their words and there would be at least two other reviewers of the transcripts. The discussion of the research topic brought unpleasant memories for some participants. In each interview, except one, I was aware of the participant's location at the time of the interview and prior to beginning, I located universities with a medical center or a local help line in that area in case it was needed. There was one interview that was interrupted several times and the participant was asked if she wanted to stop the interview because of the information she was sharing. She indicated both times that she was willing to continue to share this information with someone and proud that her information would be communicated with others. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist (see confidentiality agreement in Appendix E). The recordings were shared through password protected with two-step authentication BOX at IU in order to retain confidentiality for the participants. Original audio recordings have been erased from the audio device and the recordings were password protected on a backup hard drive. The transcriptionist deleted all files from her computer. When the transcripts were with reviewers, I removed the names from the transcripts and assigned numbers, i.e., transcript #1, transcript #2, etc. Later, the information shared with peer reviewers all contained the pseudonyms in order to maintain



continuity in the discussions about the research. I also kept data logs during the interview process. These logs included

The name of the participant

1. The date, time, and length of the interview
2. Anything that occurred to me to capture immediately after the interview, i.e. the tone of the interview – happy to participate, business like (had promised a friend to do the interview), anything that stood out during the interview.
3. Any questions the participants asked.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis was the analysis style employed since it was the least interpretive analysis approach and the intent was to present the data in the participants own terms (Sandelowski, 2000). The coding took place during the analysis so that the content informed the coding (Sandelowski, 2000). No pre-existing coding system was used.

I used a two-cycle coding system based on the Saldana (2013) coding cycle method. The Initial Cycle coding included words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, as appropriate, applied to each datum section so that later this individual coding could be used to see patterns, categories, or other similarities in the individual sections.

The initial plan was to use a coding software, but because of the use of Qualitative Description, which means keeping very close to the words of the participants, it was much simpler to capture the words by cut and paste into a Word document under the headings of the research questions. When the quotes were in the Word document, the statements were reviewed for similar words. These similar words were then highlighted.

These words, along with the sentence, paragraph, or paragraphs needed to convey the participant's meaning, or intent, is what was used for this study.

After the first coding of the data, the data was reviewed to find better terms for the summaries of answers to the research questions. The data was also reviewed to see if important answers were overlooked in the initial coding. Saldana (2013) refers to this as Second-Cycle coding. During this coding, the data was re-read, reorganized, and reconfigured to find a list of broader concepts, themes, categories, and/or statements to use during the Second Cycle coding (Saldana, 2013). The Second Cycle coding helped narrow the major components of the answers to the summaries to the research questions. I kept the participants' words in context by using sentences, paragraphs, or several paragraphs, if needed, to maintain the sentiment of the participant. After the initial interview, which had a second reviewer, each even numbered interview had a second review. Out of 11 interviews, six interviews had a second review. All the interviews went through the two-cycle coding process to check for common patterns, categories, or detect commonalities not seen in the initial coding process (Saldana, 2013).

### **Researcher's Experience**

My personal experience as a daughter of a military father served to inform my research interests, but also risked inappropriately shaping the analysis of my findings. I had a number of formal processes to reduce this risk and ensure the validity of my results. Outside of that commonality, I used the advice of hooks (1984), Lorde (2009), and Collins (2009), to let each woman speak for herself. I learned that the participants have commonalities and differences that are discussed in the Findings section.

First, I kept a reflexive research log with notes of my thoughts and feelings as this research progressed to differentiate my own experiences from that of the study participants. This note keeping was sporadic at first. It was forced, i.e. something that I felt I had to do rather than something compelled by the research. The second reviewer of my first interview encouraged me to ask follow up questions. During that first interview, I stayed with the script, asking only the questions already written. Sandelowski (2010) states that qualitative description can have grounded theory overtones. As I started the second interview, and in subsequent interviews, I felt the need to probe for explanations of some of the experiences of the participants, not necessarily to expand the story, since I wanted to keep true to the stories of the participants, but to clarify what they were telling me. I felt if I did not have an understanding of their stories, I could not give an honest recitation of that story. If I had questions, my readers would have more questions and possibly confusion. This feeling of duty to reflect changed when I completed the second interview. This was no longer a process to complete a degree. I felt a very deep responsibility to share the stories of these women and try to help others understand what these women had experienced. I was surprised that these women were sharing their personal lives with me, since I did not know most of them before the interviews. Each of the women told me that no one had ever asked them these questions before. Each of the women wished me great success. I was no longer completing this project for me. I was now completing this project for each one of these women, separately and collectively. My reflections became more person and more frequent. This was repeated each time I re-read the stories as I was describing the participants, reviewing the challenges and benefits, comparing the tapes to the transcriptions, and thinking about the words that

were repeated in their experiences that best described the stories of these women. If I thought a specific interview impacted me in some way, I planned to immediately notify the Chair to see if there was a problem with my accepting that interview as part of this study. I did not have a situation with any of these interviews that I felt required this type of contact with my committee Chair.

### **Trustworthiness**

For the study, coding was by participant and by category, i.e., challenges, benefits, effects of being Black, recommendations for social workers, and recommendations for the military. I coded separately from the reviewers, and then the codings were compared.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) used terms such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as ways to provide trustworthiness for research. Creswell (2013) stated he considers “validation” in qualitative research “to be an attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants. This view also suggested that any report of research is a representation by the author.” (pp. 249-250) I prefer the term “trustworthiness” because I am asking the readers of this study to trust that I have as accurately as possible reported the thoughts and feelings of the study participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2013) presented several strategies for the researcher to use for trustworthiness.

#### **Prolonged engagement and persistent observation.**

This includes the researcher having extended time in the field to build trust with the participants, to learn the culture of the participants, and to be able to check for misinformation that can come from distortions from the researcher or the participants.

### **Triangulation.**

In using triangulation, the researcher uses multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories to give corroborating evidence from several sources to further explain a theme or perspective.

### **Peer review or debriefing.**

This provides an external review and check by the researcher's peers over the process. The peer can ask hard questions about the researcher's process. This can include a review of the methods used by the researcher, questioning the meaning and interpretations of words used by the researcher, and provides an opportunity for the researcher to question the process. Both peer and researcher keep written records of their joint sessions.

### **Negative case analysis.**

The researcher can define working hypotheses as part of the inquiry. The data collected might not fit these hypotheses. The researcher is responsible to report the data that does not fit the hypotheses as well as the data that does fit the hypotheses.

### **Clarifying researcher bias.**

It is important that the researcher state their position on the study at the beginning of the study. Clarifying the experiences of the researcher can allow the reader to better understand how the experiences of the researcher might influence the researcher's interpretation of the data.

### **Member checking.**

The researcher requests the participants' views on the credibility of the findings and the researcher's interpretation of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider this the

most “critical” of the techniques for establishing the credibility of the researcher’s findings.

**Rich, thick description.**

The researcher provides detailed description about the participants within the participants’ setting. This allows the reader to determine if the description is consistent across the study and therefore, transferable. Is there consistency in the language that the participant used in various physical, movement, and activity description? Are there shared characteristics in the descriptions so that the reader can determine that the details interconnect? I read all the transcriptions, listened to the tapes, and compared the transcripts to the tapes. The participant’s words are used in context, i.e., complete paragraphs or several paragraphs are used to keep the meaning intact.

**External audits.**

An auditor with no connection to the researcher examines the researcher’s process and study product to determine if the findings, interpretations, and conclusions can be supported by the data.

Creswell (2013) recommends that qualitative researchers use at least two of these eight strategies in a study. This will help with trustworthiness. For this study, I used peer review, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, and rich, thick description.

There were two peer reviewers. These were persons not directly connected to the study who read the parts of the study as I developed them. The reviewers made suggestions for clarification of some of the writings. The most valuable asset of these peer reviewers was in providing a sounding board as the data collection began and

progressed. This allowed me to share feelings and have discussions as they occurred. I was able to examine the methods, findings, and conclusions throughout the process by collaborating with these peers. This collaboration began before data collection and continued throughout the writing process.

The negative case analysis came about because of the coding process. There were some participants whose answers to the research questions were not as expected. These answers, which were different from the answers of the majority of the participants, are shared in the study.

Within this study, I explained my history as a Black daughter of a military family before I began data collection. I also answered the research questions before I talked to any of the participants. This allows the readers to know some of my history, learn of my experiences, and know how this background shaped my interpretation and approach to the study.

For member checking, I asked three participants to read the written study and comment on whether the written words properly captured their words and their thoughts at the time of the interview. One participant asked for a minor correction on her job title. She agreed with the written interpretation and offered additional information about her life that related to this study. The other two participants made no correction.

Because this was a Qualitative Description study, I thought it important to use the participants' words to not only answer the question but to fill in the background on their answers to the research question; therefore, there was thick, rich description in giving the background of each participant and in sharing each participant's answer to the research question. The participants' stories were shared in much detail in order to allow the reader

to be as near as possible to the participant in reading the data, the findings, and the conclusions.

### **Human Subjects Review**

The Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study, the interview (Appendix D), demographic questions (Appendix C), and the recruitment flyer (Appendix A) before I began the study. I wrote a brief information summary to present to each participant at the beginning of the interview. Each participant was informed that they could stop participating in the interview at any time. The agreement to participate in the interview and approval to record the interview were recorded and included in transcription.

The participants in this study are all daughters of parents who are no longer in the military. I had wanted to include the daughters of current service persons. I went through Air Force IRB approval that included Pentagon review of this study proposal, demographic and interview questions, and the recruiting flyer. I was able to obtain Pentagon approval for this study, however the process took more than three months, so I was not able to have the flyer posted in time to do interviews with current military daughters. The approval is attached (Appendix F).

The purpose of this study was to find information about the challenges and benefits of being a Black daughter in a military family. Qualitative Description was the research method used in this study. The study of the data leads to the following findings.



## Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study was to find out about the experiences of growing up as a Black daughter in a military family. There were three primary research questions asked of the participants about their experience: 1) What *challenges* did you experience growing up in a military family? 2) What *benefits* did you experience growing up in a military family? and, 3) Do you believe that being Black affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)?

I also asked each participant two additional questions of importance to social workers who work with military families: 1) What advice would you give to social workers who work with military families? and 2) What advice would you have for the military to help families address the challenges you have mentioned? These two questions will be answered in the Discussions chapter.

I began this study with knowledge of my own experiences and information that I had from discussions with my sisters about our upbringing. I discovered that because of the difference in our ages, where we were living, and the family circumstances at the time, my sisters and I had different memories of our childhood. We carried different issues into adulthood because of our different memories but all of us enjoyed the travel.

So, too, the participants of this study had different memories of their childhoods and what carried with them throughout their lives. I was fortunate to talk to women of different age groups from the Army, Navy, and the Air Force, a daughter who had a mother in the Army Reserves, and a daughter who became the stepdaughter of a Marine after that Marine left active duty. Before presenting the participants' responses to the research questions, I introduce you to the participants so that you can better understand

the context of their answers. Following their introductions I will list the predominant challenges and benefits given by the participants and their opinions as to whether being Black affected their challenges and benefits.

### **Characteristics of the Participants**

The range of years of service for the parents of the women that I interviewed was six to more than 30 years of service, and in most cases 26 years (9 of 11 interviewed) years or longer. In this study, the military services included Army, Marines, Air Force, Navy, and Army Reserves. The final sample included 11 interviews. Ten parents of the participants were fathers (9 biological, one step-father). One parent was a mother. Table 2 shows a profile of participants: the pseudonym, age, occupation, which parent was in the military, parent years of military service, and the branch of service.

*Table 2: The Participants*

<b><u>Name of Participant</u></b>	<b><u>Age</u></b>	<b><u>Parent's Position in the Military</u></b>	<b><u>Parent in the Military</u></b>	<b><u>Years of Parent Service</u></b>	<b><u>Branch of Parent Service</u></b>
Joan	73	Sargeant First Class	Father	25	Army
Marshall	64	Enlisted, Sargeant First Class	Father	~28	Navy, Army
Gina	61	Master Sergeant	Father	>30	Army
Jada	52	Chief Master Sergeant	Father	~26	Army
Tracie	45	Chief Master Sergeant	Father	30	Air Force
Karen	40	Flight Commander -- Officer	Father	28-30	Air Force
Veronica	37	Sargeant	Stepfather	6	Marines
Jane	37	Colonel - Officer	Mother	30	Army Reserve
Monica	32	Chief Master Sergeant	Father	30	Air Force
Chandler	24	Major General -- Officer	Father	32	Air Force
Taylor	21	Enlisted -- Chef	Father	14	Army

Each one of the participants had a different story to tell, even the sisters and parent/daughter that I interviewed. Gina and Jada are sisters. Tracie and Monica are sisters. Marshall is Chandler's mother. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 73 years old. Before discussing the challenges and benefits of military family life for each participant, it is important to get to know each one of them. Here are their stories:

**“Joan”**

Joan was 73 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Army for 25 years and he served in the Korean Conflict. Her father was separated from the family when he was assigned to Japan and Germany. The longest period of separation was “approximately” three years. Her father was a Sargent First Class when he retired. Joan's family, while her father was in the Army, included her parents and her younger siblings (two sisters and two brothers).

Joan said that her father “was a good man. He did have – he had a drinking problem, but he took care of his family. Other than that, he was a religious man.” Her father completed the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. According to Joan, her mother “was always there.” She saw to it that their family had “three good meals a day...kept the house very well...cooked and cleaned, made sure that the household ran well.” Her mother graduated from high school.

Joan is the oldest of the five children. She described herself as “headstrong” and stated she “was determined to do whatever it was I was gonna do.” She added that she “never got in any serious trouble.” Her siblings thought she was spoiled; however, Joan does not agree with their assessment. She said that she “got away with stuff they [her siblings] couldn't get away with.”

Her sister, “Kim”, two and half years younger than Joan, kept to herself. Joan described her as “smart as a whip.” Kim always wanted to follow Joan when they were younger but Joan thought she “was a big mouth” so she did not want her around. Joan and Kim got along well except when Kim would “go back and tell everything.”

The next sibling was a brother, “Ted”, who is eight or nine years younger than Joan. Joan described Ted as “nosey.” She said “he was an average child.” When I asked her what she meant by that, she said “the average child – well, he played sports, he was a typical boy...breaking arms and stuff like that.” She said that before he got into serious trouble, “he would always come and get his sisters to fight his battles.” “He was kind of independent, you know, that type that you say oh, you can’t do this and he would say, oh yes I can and I know how to do this and he wanted to show you that he knew what he was talking about.” Joan said that most of the time Ted did know what he was talking about.

The next child is “Freddy”, who is at least 10 years younger than Joan. Joan thought he was spoiled. She said that women “just loved him to death and they just like fell over him.” Joan said that Freddy “was the total opposite of Ted.” Freddy followed Ted around and Joan thought that Ted was Freddy’s idol. She said that she does not remember much about Freddy because “by that time, I was – I was in my own world, I was grown.” Joan is 15 years older than her youngest sibling, a sister, “Alice.” She described her as being “smart as a whip too...she had her own mind.” Joan was not around Alice after Alice was four or five years old.

Joan’s father, an enlisted serviceman, worked in supply, providing Army personnel with equipment. The family lived in Battle Creek, Michigan; Ft. Lewis, Washington; Ft. Riley, Kansas and Germany. When the family was not able to live with

her father they went home to Georgia and lived around extended family. He never became an officer, although he was in Officer Candidate School (OCS), until her mother went into labor with Ted. When I asked her to clarify this she said that her father had to be at home with her and Kim. When her mother went into labor with Ted, there was no one to take care of the children at home so her father stayed at home with the girls. He was not allowed to complete the OCS training. This occurred at Ft. Lewis, Washington. The men who were in OCS with her father remained personal family friends. Joan said “they were around a lot.” The Army discourages fraternization between officers and enlisted men so this ongoing friendship was considered unusual by some people.

While her father was in Korea, Joan and her family went home to Georgia. She thinks they were separated from her father for three or four years. When her father returned from Korea, the family went to Ft. Riley for the first time. It was there that Joan said they “became aware of a lot of stuff that was going on and realized how sheltered and protected they had been. She said that people that were not in the military “always wanted to look at us like they thought we were different and like we were rich or we thought we were better than everybody else.” Joan said that her family did not feel this way, but “that’s the way they seemed to perceive us.”

I asked Joan to explain more about this perception of difference. She said that it was other Black children who would say those things about her family. She said that the children would comment on the fact that the military children rode back and forth to school on a bus and the other children had to walk to and from school--a local public school located just outside of the military post. The other Black children said that Joan and her siblings were “proper.” She said it was because she and her siblings were raised

differently from the way the other Black children were raised. These children lived in the town just outside Ft. Riley, Kansas.

. Joan and her family moved back to Ft. Riley, Kansas when she was in her senior year of high school, so part of her senior year was in Germany and the remainder was in Kansas.

Joan said that she did not work after high school.

Girl, please – uh-huh – I didn’t work! My parents took care of me (laughter) and I didn’t go to college until after I had – after I had ...all of my children, then that’s when I went to school. So...I got pregnant when I was 20. I had [her first son] before I was 21. You want the truth, don’t you? Ok, there you are – but my parents took care of me and him until I left with [son’s father’s name] – my oldest son’s father, which all of my children are by him.

Joan met her son’s father the first time that she was at Ft. Riley. He was in the Army. “Big mistake – big BIG mistake!” (laughter). “He got out. He got out of the service in Ft. Riley, but he came back to Ft. Riley and got me and the baby. And that’s when we moved to Cincinnati. He was from Cincinnati.”

### **“Marshall”**

Marshall was 64 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Navy and the Army. He retired as an E7 (Sergeant First Class) with approximately 28 years of service. Growing up, her family consisted of her parents, an older sister, and an older brother. She is the youngest of the three children.

Marshall’s father was “kicked out uneducated” from the Navy. Marshall explains that her father went into the Navy when he was 15 or 16 years old, at the end of World War II, but the Navy kicked out all “the uneducated Black people” and he then went into the Army. He had a third grade education and went up north during the northern

migration<sup>1</sup> at 12 or 13 years old and worked in speak-easies until he got into the Navy. Marshall said that he could barely read and write. She said that her father was a Seabee peeling potatoes and doing menial work on ships during WWII.

She said that her father told her that in WWII, most of the “Blacks survived because they were digging trenches and cooking.” He told her that by Korea the military had “figured out they had all survived and then they put them on the front line.” Her father served in World War II, the Korea Conflict, and Vietnam. Her father was also separated from the family while he served in Tehran for two years.

Marshall described her father when she was growing up as “a real sweet guy, real kind guy, real soft-hearted guy, but not – I don’t remember him being involved, very much in our life.” She said that he went to work, came home, had dinner with the family, and her mother did “the entire child-rearing and all that stuff.” Whenever Marshall’s mother wanted her father to become involved in discipline, “he really didn’t do that well.” She said that her father would hit the side of the tub and they would scream because he just could not discipline them. Her father was the good guy in her family. Marshall said he was “real gentle, real sweet, but not involved” and she was not able to confide in her father, “he wasn’t involved even enough that you wouldn’t confide in him – I mean, he wasn’t that guy.” “He was the provider.” He was a “real sweet provider guy, but not a lot involved.” She said that it was because if you were enlisted “in those days,

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<sup>1</sup> The northern migration, better known as the Great Migration began in 1916 with black families fleeing Selma, Alabama. It was a quiet departure at first. Soon that quiet departure led to six million people leaving the southern states in the United States and going to northern states. These Americans were seeking asylum within their own country because of famine, war, and pestilence; the Great Migration was the first big step that the servants of the south took without asking (Smithsonian Magazine, 2016).

you worked.” “You worked long hours, you came home, you were tired, you got up and you worked again.”

She said that her father was “a loyal, loyal, loyal military soldier-type guy.” “He was gung-ho, gung-ho” because he was born in 1928 and the family would not have been able to go to the places they went, the children would not have been able to have the education they had, they would not have been able to live in a desegregated environment – “all that stuff the military afforded us,” so her father had great respect for the military and for what the military did for the family. She described this as her father being “all in” for the military.

She described her mother as a “complicated subject.” Marshall thinks her mother was clinically depressed, but “it wasn’t diagnosed back in those days.” “Who knows what in those days, they kept family secrets so you don’t know.” “She just was not a happy person and she really probably shouldn’t have had children.” Marshall said that her maternal grandmother “valued the men in the family and did not value the women in the family,” but Marshall thinks that her mother

Was a spirit that needed to be loved and nurtured and coddled and it wasn’t, so she...needed that constant reassurance, I think and I don’t think – and the time that she was born, it was given by either necessarily, your, parents – where they don’t have to say I love you every day, we take care of you, so clearly –that kind of thing? But I think her spirit needed a lot more than that so – she was, she was very clinically depressed...it wasn’t diagnosed back in those days, but when you look at it now, I’m pretty sure that’s’ what it was and most of my childhood – I think she was in bed. That’s what I remember most about it. She did the cooking and all that other stuff, but the happy days were extremely rare – they were extremely rare. She wasn’t the mom that got up and fixed breakfast or anything, she was in bed when we went to school and she was in bed when we came home half the time, and she just was not happy. Of course, when you’re a kid, you don’t realize that. It is just what it is, but when you look back on it. I didn’t have a very demonstrative family except for me. I literally believe I was put in that family to chill them out. Nobody hugged or



anything, but I did. To their credit, they accepted it. But as much as I said she wanted love, it made her very uncomfortable cause I was one of that – that skin on skin – I say that to this day. I need to be rubbing on you – c'mere.

Marshall said her mother was

Extremely bright...a well-read – would read anything even though she did not graduate from high school. There isn't a New York Times or any kind of puzzle that she couldn't complete....she took the Mensa test and passed it but didn't have enough self-esteem to actually go through and apply for the membership cause she was Black and she was born in 1932 and you didn't do that kind of stuff.

Marshall repeated that her mother was...

Extremely bright but very complicated. Very complicated...over the years as I grew up...she and dad both became – I mean, towards the end of their life, they held hands and everything, they became very loving people, but it just wasn't something that they were raised with, that they were used to – anything, so...but like I said, I was supposed to teach them PDA [public display of affection] – I'm all about PDA so.... over time, ok, the way she's leaning on everybody, I guess we could at least hold hands. That kind of thing – yeah, so...but I always look at my mom's life as perspective cause her life was fine, but she didn't perceive it as fine and, again, you learn lessons by looking at other people, too, and saying, be grateful for what you have and it's not that bad, it's just not that bad...families are just interesting and complicated and I think my brother and sister considered them much more complicated family dynamics than I did.

I asked her why she said that. She said,

Because they made it as an excuse for not being their best. I mean, we weren't – we weren't beaten any more than any kids were beaten in those days. My dad wasn't a drunk, there was no physical or sexual abuse or anything, there was just – they also...had my mom's spirit where they needed a lot more affection than she was giving and of course daddy didn't give it cause he wasn't there so there was a lot of affection missing apparently...that – I hate to be not generous, but my perception is...so what? So, so, you didn't like that so you go out and when you have your family and you – you do better, your perception of better...but neither one of them married, had relationships to speak of that were successful. My brother died when he was 40 of AIDS...supposedly from prison tattoos, but, who knows when you're doing drugs what you're doing...and my sister was taken care of by gentlemen most of her life until she got too old

and should've married that last one, so now my dad – I pay her rent and my dad gives her spending money. So they were not successful – my idea of successful in life.

I asked Marshall to tell me about her siblings one at a time, with the sister first since she was the oldest child.

I was not bonded with my brother and sister. They bonded with each other and we were all – they were 11 months apart, we were born in 51, 52, 53, 1951, 1952, 1953, so we were stair-stepped, but they were close and, it was like they were in a club I didn't get to join, so...my memory of them was them. Those two were the cool ones, they were...and again, dynamics are really complicated...but my sister was the first grandchild girl for a very long time so she was very, they were happy to have her. My brother was my dad's only son, happy to have him...my mom was 19 by the time she had me, the third – she was just turning 20...and my dad was like a Corporal recruiting in Chicago, they were all poor as dirt. And...did not want a third, did not want the third one – they did not want, and I was – my mom told me that she tried everything she could to abort me when she was pregnant – everything she could find, quinine – she said she tried everything. She told me this...at a period where she was feeling extremely guilty about it for some reason and...I was probably – I was a teenager probably when she told me. I was going like 'whatever.' Heck – I wouldn't have wanted that many kids either....so my sister – to this day – my dad will freely admit is his favorite. My brother was my mom's favorite so when he died of AIDS that's when her heart literally got broken and she never recovered. So...but again, they were very needy people. I grew up with some very needy people. My dad and I were the only ones that were not needy. We were the nurturers, so – so...my sister, our childhood was about bucking up my sister's ego for some reason, I don't know – and she was the pretty one, but she and my mom clashed constantly because she was one of those daughters that really thought she was the mom – she wanted to be running the house and my mom – it came at a period of time where kids don't run the house, you don't get to say how you want it, so they had constant clashes...and it caused a little bit of a rift in the marriage because, of course, my dad was more sympathetic to my sister and my mom, had her issues. It was very complicated family and I spent most of my time bowing out. I was the one like I'm gonna go read. I'm gonna go read because it was way more complicated than it needed to be even in my head then. I'm like this – this just doesn't need to be this complicated, and so I spent a lot of time bowing out, therefore, now my dad says – he doesn't remember anything about my childhood, they didn't know my favorite color, they didn't know – I just bowed out – there was just too much going on. I'm going like – no. I'm not doing this...and I was known to be a very quiet child. I didn't give my opinions, I didn't do any

of that stuff until I was very much older and it surprised them a lot by then – when I was grown and they realized what kind of person I was – they were, ‘you weren’t like this when you were a kid,’ ‘where did this come from?’ I was just biding my time– yeah...so and my brother...complicated, complicated guy...military...enlisted military kid, got accepted to West Point, then when he got accepted to West Point, decided he didn’t wanna go, and my dad was enlisted, so you know what that did – so he decided he didn’t wanna go, but my dad was not the pressure or push kind-of guy – like I said, he’s a very gentle guy, so my brother went to UNLV and... got involved with the wrong crowd, got into drugs, got into all that and he was the smartest one of the bunch, too – he was extremely bright, but my dad says extremely lazy – that’s what my dad says now he was bright and everything came to him easily, so that creates lazy people – I can see that it does. When things come to you easily and you don’t have to struggle, then when you do have to struggle, you don’t know how to do it because things have always come easily. So he had a hard time...when things got hard– so when things got hard, he would just quit...and so he – again, by my standards neither one had really successful transitions into adulthood.

Marshall continued to talk about her sister; I asked if her sister went to college.

Nope. No, she literally was a gorgeous, gorgeous girl that, again, in my head – it was easier to be adored by men and taken care of and coddled than it was – cause that’s what my dad did, I mean, she just found men like my dad – that adored her, coddled her, indulged her until she was probably mid-50s – around 50 and then the next boyfriend never showed up to take care of her, so...we’ve been taking care of her.

Marshall shared further about her siblings and the rules.

Well, they were very good at manipulating my parents’ preferences. So they were very good at manipulating. If they wanted – since she was my dad’s favorite, if it was something they could get done by manipulating my dad, they would send her in. If it was my mom, they would send my brother in and they knew what they were doing, they actively did it – I knew they were doing it And my mom and dad fell for it every time, but rather than saying my mom and dad fell for it every time, I really – lost respect for my brother and sister for using my mom and dad’s love and preferences to manipulate them – I mean, and this as a child, this is not even as an adult, but as a child I thought that there was something wrong with the character of somebody that would do that. So we were never – we were never close. We just – I had an ethic even as a child that they didn’t have and – and I didn’t respect how they manipulated the situation. Even though they were children and children manipulate what they can – I get it now, but the relationships and your family dynamic have the tendency to

stay the way – that they are. So even though I know that now...emotionally, I still did not respect my brother and sister. So we were not a close family in that way. But there was no – no excessive drinking, no drugs, no...infidelities – none of that stuff. And that's where I say you look on the bright side – at least we had a family unit that a lot of people didn't have. So, so there were absolute pluses.

I asked Marshall to tell me more about her father's role in the military.

He...he was one of those very serious military guys that, this is providing a life for my family that I could not have provided otherwise, all in...and made us aware that we would go to Collins, Mississippi where he's from occasionally, almost every summer to Tyronza, Arkansas, about an hour south of Memphis where my mom was from – and see what our life would have been if it had not been for the military. So– I mean, we're talking about like "In the Heat of the Night", those share-cropping shacks with the old people with the run-over shoes, the women wearing the men's house shoes in the house dresses sitting on the porch, and share-cropping, I mean, it was – we're talking old south, uneducated...dirt roads, working in the fields, in the cotton fields for the white man in the big white house – the whole thing. That was my mom's side. My dad's side – his mom owned land in Mississippi – in Collins, Mississippi, and actually it was on the white side of the town because her father got it from his father...who was Scottish descent, he was Mulatto, he got most of it, but then his legit white brothers and sister took most of it away, but they wound up with their 40 acres, so she had 40 acres, but in order to keep it over the years...she kept it through the kindness of gentlemen. She and my sister had a lot in common (laughter). So...we did my dad's DNA and my daddy was like 49% Scottish, Great Britain Scotland and 49%...African and 1% other, he's kinda like split right down the middle. So, yeah, so then she was a maid, not totally uneducated, but...she thought that her family was better because they owned their own property. Better than my mom's family, so she thought daddy married down...of course, my mom – she was not – she was the housekeeper that did not keep her own house, like how hairdressers have crazy hair. Yeah, so my mom said her house was just way too nasty for us to stay – so we visited occasionally, but my mom would go like, no – roaches are coming out of the sofa, and my mom was OCD [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder], so that was not working for her...so we didn't visit that much, but...and my mom's family – I mean, I don't know if most black folk families are like my family, but there were so many secrets and so many cousins that weren't really cousins, they were brothers and sisters and that ain't none of her daddy and yada – Honey, I got cousins that are not related at all and I've got cousins that are probably a whole lot closer than cousins so – and again those kind of things were a big deal in my mom's family and I'm one of those that I believe in airing your dirty laundry. That's the only way you're gonna

sanitize it. So people don't tell me stuff like that because I'm not keeping those kinds of secrets. I mean, who cares? Who cares who slept with who a hundred years ago? I don't care. But you can't have a clear and accurate history if you don't have a clear and accurate history. I'm the one that was doing the ancestry.com and everything – upset a lot of people and [her husband's] mom didn't want me to have any information about them because they had family secrets! I was going like you know what – it ain't that serious! I mean, we're not talking about you coulda been the king of England, I mean, these are just weird, stupid things – but that's who I am, but black dynamic families that I know of are not like that so – people be like don't tell [Marshall]. She'll sit around at Thanksgiving and talk all about it – not sure what –

I asked Marshall if her mother, who she described as being in bed a lot at home was the same way when she went to visit family.

No – she was – she was me and she was the nurturer – she was the one that...was – she was the one – when anybody was sick, they called mom. She was the one that had to go and cook and clean and tend to and all that other stuff and – but it was thankless. It was understood that it was her job and she – they would call her and she would go do it, but they weren't very nice to her...but that's my perspective...when I went to Indiana – I have relatives in East Chicago and Chicago and...and in Gary and when I went there, my mom was saying, 'well, if there's any trouble, you can get your aunt' and I was like, they weren't nice to you and you were their sister! I'll be doggoned if I'm gonna call them. And that's when I think my mom and dad started seeing who I was cause my mom said, 'call your aunt,' No – I'm not calling those people! They weren't nice to you and you were their sister. Why would they be nice to me...so...she just – I think she took abuse – emotional abuse from them. I don't know if they beat her or anything, but they were not – again, not loving...people at all...and I consider it abusive – the way they treated her. When you demand to be – you need to come here and take care of this, you need to do this, this, not so much of a thank you – and it's like well that's what she's supposed to do, you're family. No, no – that's not how it necessarily works, but yeah, she was always the one that had to drop everything and tend to everybody because that was her job, I guess. With her family. So I guess when she got home, she relaxed, I don't know (laughter) – ok, I'm done, I'm done, yeah!

Marshall talked about the places that her family lived while her father was in the Army:

Ok...we lived in – like I said, he was in East Chicago recruiting...in the early 50s...and then we moved to Germany and we were in Germany until I was four or five. From Germany we went to New Jersey – Ft. Monmouth and I think from New Jersey – that's when he went to Tehran – in the early 60s and we went to Gary, Indiana because when we were in Gary, when they were in East Chicago, they actually bought a house in Gary...so we went and lived in the house in Gary for a couple of years. Then we went to Ft. Benning, Georgia in the mid-60s – you can imagine how that was.

Well, we stayed on base. It was one of those things where in those days in the south you stayed on base. You didn't go off base. Black folks in the south – no. Unless you wanted to keep your head down and cross the street and all that other stuff, which I wasn't raised to do, you pretty much stayed on base...so I think my brother and sister actually started high school there...which was off-base. But I do remember the – it was my first real...experience with racism...I remember I got called in cause I hit a little white boy on his nose – across the bridge of his nose with my ruler and – you remember how rulers used to have a metal – line in it? I popped his little butt – we were on the bus and I was sitting in front of him and he said something about niggers aren't supposed to sit in front of white people – whatever so and so and so and I just turned around and popped him as hard as I could with my ruler cause it was the only thing I had available at the time (laughter) – popped his little butt. And there was some kind of drama about that, but it was military and actually, it wasn't, – in those days you did not get your dad in trouble either. You did not do anything to embarrass your father in the military...but not much came of it. I don't remember anything that came of it and my folks weren't activists in any stretch of the imagination, but they didn't know – they didn't say don't do that. ...when we went to school, my mom said – we never said yes, ma'am – yes, sir – we weren't raised to say that. When we went to the south – of course that's a southern thing and my mom said, she told us, 'when you go to school, a polite yes and no will do,' so I said they weren't activists, but they didn't teach us to be, but they got their little thing in. So she said a polite yes or no is all that's required. And I was going ok, cool, so I went to school. Guess what? Guess what? It's yes, ma'am and I said my mom and dad said a polite yes and no is all that's required, so they pop you on your knuckles with the ruler.

And I got popped on my knuckles. My brother and sister started saying yes, ma'am, yes, sir. I got popped until they got tired of popping me and left me alone. They'd literally just one day stopped hitting me about it. I was stubborn – I was very polite – I was a polite little girl and I didn't roll my eyes or anything, so I think they started feeling bad about it after a while, cause I was extremely polite but I was not gonna do it. So...we were there – and we were there for like two and a half – maybe four years.

I think we were there for four years. We were there...until he went to Vietnam, I think. Yeah. So we were there for about four years. I think four year tours were normal back then...and no, they just left me alone. They also thought all black people could sing and they thought I was just being – obnoxious by pretending I couldn't sing until they realized, no, she really can't sing, and they gave me the xylophone to play during (laughter) – I was enthusiastic – I'll sing – aaahhhhh – ok, here's the xylophone – bang on this for a while. (laughter) Seriously, I'm not even kidding.

While Marshall's father went to Vietnam the family stayed at a waiting wives space.

So there was a waiting wives space that used to be Schilling Manor Air Force Base in Salina, Kansas – it was a closed space. They opened it up and it was a base full of...spouses of husbands in Vietnam. There were no dads. When your dad came home, you moved and went to his next assignment. So...that's where we were! And...it was a really cool place to be in some ways because nobody's – everybody's dad – everybody was in the same situation – didn't have to explain to anybody – everybody knows where your dad was so all the moms were in the same boat. It was very – it was really cool because you had the Commissary – it was just a cool place, just no dad. So we stayed there while he was in Vietnam. When your dad came home, you moved and went to his next assignment. So...that's where we were!

I asked Marshall to explain about waiting wives spaces.

Yeah, they were called waiting wives spaces – as far as I know, that's what they were called. And Schilling Manor Air Force Base in Salina, Kansas is where we were – so that was one. I think they had several...but that was the one we were at. So that was something they did then that they clearly have not done since as far as supporting. But yeah, it was an entire full base full of people. The only thing that was scary was...it was like the boogey man – when you saw the military car driving up into housing, all the mothers would run in and take the kids and run in the house and slam the door shut like that would keep them from coming to your house because everybody knew what that meant and when that happened, you had to be gone in like – I mean, real quick! Certainly 30 days, – Oh, yeah, you're not a military dependent anymore, so these people were gone! (This refers to the family being required to move off the post after the death of the parent in the military). Yeah, so you knew if they come to your house...I remember my mom woke us up one night and pulled us in – she had been watching the news and my dad was R&R (rest and recuperation, a time for relaxation in the military) in like – I forget where they went R&R – maybe Saigon – I remember someplace in Vietnam that

he was on his – a short R&R thing, not long enough to come home or anything, of course, they didn't do that in those days, but...so she knew where he was supposed to be and it was the hotel he was supposed to be in and she was watching the news and the hotel got bombed like to the ground virtually. In the middle of the night it got bombed. So my mom got us up and told us that was the hotel daddy was staying at, the guy would probably come to the house and we'd probably be changing schools and yada, yada, yada, but – so this is what she was telling us. Then we got a phone call from Vietnam through some military line or whatever – anyway, it was my dad calling to say he was fine...that he wasn't in the hotel at the time and I'm remembering thinking what a mean mother my mother was – I thought, 'gosh, you're so mean to him!' because all she did was jump in his crap about 'where were you at 2:00 in the morning if you weren't in your room?' (laughter) and I was like 'daammn! You are mean!' I mean, she was – I mean, and I think – I get angry – if my daughter did something dangerous and she could have really hurt herself, but she actually didn't hurt herself – she knew she better say, 'I'm fine, I'm fine,' because I'm one of those – when I get scared, I'll swat you – she never got swatted except for lying and danger. And if she did something dangerous, she would say, 'I'm fine! I'm fine!' And she'd run off and go cry somewhere because she knew. If I told you that's dangerous and you did it and you almost hurt yourself, I'm gonna pop you. So...I think that my mother was probably the same way. I think my mother was probably so scared and then so relieved, but the only way that she could process it is to yell at him. I was thinking, 'wow, mom!' (laughter) I really did – I thought, 'man, you're mean!' Yeah. But...that was the dynamic of the waiting wife space.

I asked what it was like living on the waiting wives base.

Oh, it was like – I mean, except for the husbands on a mission, yeah! You had chaplains, you had a hospital, you had... maintenance. You had all those squadron, maintenance squadron – you didn't have an operational squadron, per se, cause – you had...like the support side, logistic side, not ops [operations]. So it was a full functioning – fully functioning base. Yeah, there was just no – no military mission, it was a military support mission. They had more than one, but Schilling Manor – it was Schilling was some guy, , named after some guy, I remember that and it's Schilling Manor Air Force Base and it was in Salina, Kansas. Yep!

Marshall continued sharing about where her family lived while her father was in the military.



When he got back from Vietnam, let me think a second – we went to Ft. Knox, Kentucky. South again.

Again – I think my brother and sister thought it was a whole lot tougher than I did. I was again – I had no striving to be popular. I had no striving to be – to have friends. I didn't have any of that drive, so I didn't have any of those frustrations...hold on a second.

Kentucky is the south – absolutely...but it's funny because this would have been around 68, 69 – 1968, 1969, 70 – so 68 – we stayed every place four years, so it would have been like – I'm just thinking of the years – Daddy was in Vietnam when I was 13, so that would have been 68, no 66. 66 and 67, so after that we went to Kentucky,

After Ft. Knox, we went to...SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) Mons, Belgium. I graduated high school there.

It's the craziest bunch of people you ever seen in your life cause there's like...people married to military...and like Ann Dunwoody was in my graduating class – she was the four-star Army General. She was in my graduating class.

### **“Gina”**

Gina was 61 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Army for more than 30 years. While her father was in the Army her family included her father, mother, an older sister, and a younger sister. Gina is the middle daughter.

Her father served in Korea and twice in Vietnam. He retired as a Master Sergeant.

I asked Gina to tell me about her father.

A very smart man. He had really great charisma, he got along with everyone. I remember having cookouts and having people come over no matter where we went in the United States or overseas. We always managed to have great times...he was in electronics and he did that for many years in the military and then when he retired, I remember him going into his office and doing exactly the same thing he did in the same room that he did [Her father was hired as a civilian to do the same job after he retired from the Army].

That was amazing – and then he did that for several years and retired from that, so...I do remember with my father all the trips,, going to different places and us driving from Virginia to California, from California to Virginia, you, know doing cross-country traveling – so I remember being on the road a lot with my father and I remember just traveling a lot.

I asked her to tell me about her mother.

My mom – strong, strong individual. She really ran the whole show...she kept everything organized and, budget quite well...she was the heart, the core of everything. She loves sports, so she took us to a lot of sports – baseball, she loved wrestling. She – I remember when we were traveling a lot, she was pregnant with my baby sister “Jada”, and I remember we were going cross-country and she – oh, it was so hard for her to do that, but I remember being in the backseat of that car and seeing her going through all her little morning sickness and stuff, but...she was a great cook...she always had some special Sunday [dinner] and we always had certain meals on certain days.

Gina talks about her two sisters. The oldest is “Simone.”

Oh, my older sister Simone –she’s strong-willed...she’s – she’s quite dynamic, she’s a real socialite, she enjoys life...I remember coming up she used to have the best parties and cause back in the day, they have those house parties –. And she used to have the best parties! I mean, I would be sitting on the steps watching all her friends dance and everything cause between us there’s like almost four years apart, but I remember her and when she was quite stylish and...she likes nice things – she was just a fun person to be around. She was four years older than me, so she – she had her own set of friends that she had and...but I always admired her.

Gina is the middle child.

Middle child’s just really difficult – kinda hard for a middle child sometimes, but – because you have the first one, everybody’s paying attention to and you have the baby and everybody’s paying attention to it, and then the middle child – you just sort-of like – you’re non-existent in a way because if you’re good, nobody’s really noticing you so you just – but... the middle child is...you sorta have to be on your own and try to figure things out and that’s what I think of myself – I just managed to do what I have to do. For instance, when it came to school, I filled out my paperwork, I... I looked into it – without my sisters. But I feel those skills came from my mom and my dad.

I asked her to explain what she meant by the skills came from her parents.

Well, I found...just the ability to manage to be sensible about things – I think came from my mother without even her saying anything to me. She could – her eyes could speak it, her body language could speak it...she really didn’t have to say it for us to get it which we thought – we always think that’s just amazing because most people have to yell and scream and holler at the kids to get them to do what they want them to do, but she had

an ability to...to know without saying a word what you need to do.  
(laughter) And I think that's something that's lost in this generation.

The youngest sister is "Jada."

Oh, Jada – she was my, she was my little girl! Her and I – we went – we traveled the most. My older sister left us and went on to college and everything, so it was just Jada and myself and were together – there were nine years between Jada and I, so – Jada – what I remember the most is she's always been intelligent, but I never thought of her as intelligent – she was just my sister and we had the best times...like when I went to Germany, I learned in my work and school and everything – they taught me... how to type in school and so I was – I could type maybe 100 words per minute in school and so that was one of my strong areas – when I in my senior year, I worked as a secretary, administrative assistant for some companies while I was in school – my last year and a half – so I had secretary skills and so forth, and what happened was Jada learned German in school which was so fascinating because, I was at the age where they weren't teaching us, but they were teaching her – and she was maybe ten or something and so she would come home and we had a great big blackboard in her room, so she would come home and I would ask her what German word did she learn today and she would say, ok, so I would sit on the bed and she would write the words on the board and then we would pronounce them and so actually this went on the whole entire time, every day that I had picked up quite a few words so I could drive and ride the trolleys and go different places within Germany and in return, I started – right after that, after we learned our little German class, I would teach her the note – the key on the typewriter – what the home keys and how to type and so forth and by the time we were done that first year there, she was a master at typing and I was somewhat good in German – speaking German, so it worked beautifully – we were a great team. (laughter) But that's what I remember about – quite well about Jada and just her presence being there in the house. We sort-of were like best friends because we were with each other going different places in the United States we became really close.

She described her father's role in the military this way:

He was a Master Sergeant, which was an honorable role for a black man back in the day...to have – he was like one of the first ones in the universe to have that type of position, so we were quite proud of him and...he was – my father was sort-of the life of the party and he has a wonderful sense of humor and...and, but when he – you could tell when he means business and he would make sure that we knew that – he had his way of making sure, enough play time, let's get serious, you know what you need to do-stuff like that.

Gina described the family's travel to different areas.

Ok – well, when I was quite young...my father had to go overseas and he couldn't take the family with him, so the military had set up a housing area waaaay in the country, back in the woods and we lived in Norfolk, Virginia, so we moved from where that was at and there was a housing area – must have had about maybe 15 units of houses there, but it was way in the woods and behind our house was a lake and a swing – they put a swing so we could swing across the lake and...but we were placed there until – and they were all military wives and families that were placed there...and we stayed there for almost two years...out there and they came and they mowed the lawn, kept up the place.

Oh, yeah...one thing about – he would leave –we would always mainly go back to my grandmother's house who lived in Virginia – Norfolk, Virginia, so any time he would leave, we would try to get back to her. So that – that was the center point, but sometimes that wasn't possible so we couldn't do that, so – but we did go live in Ft. Benning, Georgia for about two years. We lived in...which was nice – Ft. Benning, we had a great time down there – that was our own little world, you didn't have to leave it to go off-base or anything – everything was there, provided – school, everything... of course, we lived in Stuttgart, Germany and we also lived in Okinawa and Okinawa was quite an experience. I really loved that experience, too – that's where my sister – all of us were there. My older sister and Jada were in Okinawa, so we all had a chance to experience that...we lived in – we did lots of traveling outside of the military as well – people – like in Seattle, Washington – we lived there, too, though – we lived in Seattle for about a year and a half...I think – oh – Oklahoma was our last destination.

She described her memories of living in Japan.

Just the culture – the main thing was – when we first got there and we couldn't get into military quarters, so we had to live off-base, right with the Okinawans and so we got an apartment and so we all were there – walk in the door and it was dark – but we saw something crawling across the floor – you could see the shadow of it, and before we could turn on the light and we were like what on earth is that? And so we turn on the lights, we didn't see anything, we had no clue what that was. Find out later they were little lizards! And there, that was normal! (laughter) I was like, ok! So my dad went to work – when everybody was home, we'd have to put the stuff down, it makes them drowsy and then they come out and die, – (laughter) – so...that was say hello to Okinawa!

The last place they lived was Oklahoma.

We pretty much knew – we knew my dad was getting up in years and he was ready to retire, so we kinda knew this was probably gonna be the end of the road. ... We were so much older now. Started looking at things a little differently...our lives were all going in different directions...I was involved in a relationship, Simone was at home with my grandma where she passed and then she had a friend and so she was in Virginia and Jada was – she was getting ready to start to go to college, so it was just – I would say that was a turning point for all of our lives right there in Oklahoma – that’s where – sort-of like we all went in different directions.

### **“Jada”**

Jada was 52 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Army for “about 26” years. He served in Korea and Vietnam. She remembers the family being separated from her father when her father went to Korea, after the Korean Conflict, “I think I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade.” Jada is not married and has no children. When she grew up the family was her parents and two older sisters. Jada is the youngest daughter.

We started with Jada talking about her father.

My dad? Let’s see...my dad’s a great guy, he’s still living...he lives in ... Oklahoma...he’s a great guy, he was always caring and loving and...he was interested in our school and made sure we had everything we needed to go to school. As far as I know – he was out laying wire and he saw – he started out laying wire and then he saw these guys drinking coffee in the tent and he said, how do they get to do that? And they told him he had to go back to school, so he started taking all the classes he could take and then he learned how to repair the radios and then he learned how to be an instructor for those who repaired and operated the radios.

She described her mother this way:

Oh, she’s a sweetheart...she’s just passed away...she held down the fort especially when he was gone...she was a disciplinarian and...made sure that we did what we were supposed to do and didn’t give my dad a hard time especially when he was tired from coming home from work...but she provided for us – meals on the table, she was a stay-at-home mom – most of the time.

This is her description of her sisters:

Ok – my oldest sister is “Simone”...she’s 13 years older than me, so she was with me most of the time, but more time was my middle sister “Gina” who was only nine years older than me, but we did more traveling together because we were closer in age...so when we went to live in Germany...my middle sister went with us, but my oldest sister did not. She stayed back in Virginia.

Jada’s described the places that she lived:

Oh, golly – so...when I was three years old, we lived in Okinawa, Japan and then we lived a year with my grandmother when I was four years old and when I was five and six years, we lived in Ft. Benning, Georgia and then when I was seven, we went back to Virginia and when I was eight and nine and part of ten, we lived in Germany and then from Germany we went to...Oklahoma and we stayed in Oklahoma until I graduated as a senior, but we were supposed to leave and go to Virginia as his last duty station, but then my mom got sick, so we went ahead and stayed in Oklahoma.

What stands out in her mind about growing up in a military family is “Traveling. I loved to travel and to this day, I still love to travel. I love going to new places, I love going to different countries. It was *wonderful!* (laughter) Wonderful!”

### **“Tracie”**

Tracie was 45 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Air Force for 30 years. He served in Vietnam and Desert Storm. He retired as a Chief Master Sergeant. Initially, it was just Tracie and her parents until she was 13 years old when her sister, “Monica”, was born.

So it was myself, my mom, my dad and then about 13 years later, my little sister came along! (laughter) So it was just myself and my mom and dad for a while, and then like I said, when I was 13 my little sister Monica came into play!

Tracie described her family members beginning with her father:

So dad had gone into the military, I believe when he graduated high school, like 17 or 18 and so he had been in a few years before he met my

mom. Obviously they got married...I would call my dad very much a disciplinarian...very much a – family provider. Also...loved the military...let me see what else can I say? Was not really...I don't wanna say that he wasn't...emotional, but he wasn't a hugger. Like he took care of family, he'd hug ya every once in a blue moon or say I was proud of you every once in a while, but wasn't very the touch-feely type of person. So mom was pretty much the housewife, she did work off and on periodically, but was very much the one that was more of the touchy-feely person – she made sure that the house ran well and made sure that...the family was taken care of whether it was dinner on the table or going to the grocery store or running errands and what not...so, yeah, mom was pretty much the backbone of the family, I would say.

Tracie described her role in the family:

So as a kid, it was pretty much to mind my parents (laughter) and stay out of trouble, but outside of that really just to go to school, do the best that I could do...make sure that I was mindful again, being that my dad was from Florida, my mom is from Texas – we call Texas home...you were very much taught that parents are the sort-of the runners of the house and you need to be mindful of them and mindful of your elders and things like that, so those were values that were very much instilled into my growing up. Pretty much it was as a kid – go to school, do what you need to...try not to get in trouble and participate in family events and activities.

This is Tracie's description of her sister:

So my baby sister is the baby of the family – got away with, child – everything! I love her dearly, though, but...she was pretty much – again, also – they were a little bit more active, I think, in her life and maybe it was because they were older and my dad had kinda risen through the ranks at that time, so they...put her in a lot more like extracurricular activities. She was also again encouraging her to go to school, you do the best that you can, you don't get in trouble, but they were a little bit, in my opinion, more active in her life and her extracurricular activities, but that was outside looking in – not to say that my parents didn't attend my school plays – they did and I was in band and what-not, but it was just a different dynamic when my sister came along.

Her father worked on the flight line:

He – since I was a little bitty kid – he worked out on the flight line. He was sort-of the flight line supervisor and then as he progressed through the military, he wound up actually becoming, I believe, it's called the Senior Enlisted Advisor during the last couple of years of his career, but prior to that, he was pretty much in leadership roles – started out on the flight line

and then moved up the ranks, flight line supervisor and then continued to get in leadership roles and I don't know, right off hand,, how many people he would supervise in his flight line arena, but I do know it was a significant amount.

The family lived in several places while her father was in the military:

Gosh, we lived stateside as well as abroad. So we lived in – let's see, Texas twice, Florida...North Carolina, Washington State, New Mexico. We lived in England twice – it was RAF [Royal Air Force] Upper Heyford, and then...my dad had – what is it called – an unaccompanied tour to...what's the name of that place – Japan and I think he may have had an unaccompanied tour – I wanna say to maybe like Korea.

...So we lived in Del Rio, Texas...when I was in elementary school...it was – it seemed sort-of remote – this is back during the early 80s and so it seemed like we were far away from all of our family, but... happy lifestyle – we traveled...my parents also enjoyed doing boating events and what not, so we'd do that. When we moved to Florida, Florida was also a little bit different because my dad is from Florida, so we were a little bit closer to family, but it felt like we were a little bit more connected. Lots of fun...hot weather, I remember, and I remember the flying roaches! I don't know why – but I remember we'd be out and they'd fly around and hit you in the head! We used to also visit my grandmother in Florida who's my dad's mom and my aunts and uncles and sometimes periodically my aunts and my uncles would come down to visit us – we were stationed at Homestead, Florida. And North Carolina...I don't remember too much – I remember being very sickly and I don't know if it was because I had severe allergies, but...I remember having to go take allergy shots and some other medicines and what not and I didn't particularly care for North Carolina because I was picked on – I was a little, bitty kid at the time - you oughta see me now, but anyway – picked on as a kid in North Carolina and so I was very happy when we got ready to relocate...from North Carolina. We also lived in...Washington State – Spokane – Fairchild Air Force Base – really enjoyed that time. Even though it was far away from a lot of family, we really felt connected to the community – there was a lot of – we joined a church...there was a lot of different activities we were involved in and so that was really a lot of fun. Then we moved to our first tour overseas which was in England and really – the first time we were there, it took probably about a year before...we kind of acclimated and that's myself and my mom – my sister was tiny at the time. My dad had been to England before when he first joined the military, but after we kinda got in and got the hang of things, enjoyed kinda going out on the economy and interacting with the British people and trying British food and being involved in British culture. We came back stateside and we were at – what's the name of that place? It was – Reese Air Force Base in



Lubbock, Texas and that time frame was pretty a lot of fun for me because.... I was in high school at the time, I felt like we were finally somewhat settled. I felt like I had made friends and I had gotten my driver's license and first car, so I was a little bit more active – really enjoyed that time frame and then my dad wound up getting orders back to England. I wasn't happy at the time about going back overseas, but when we got back over there, it turned out that it was a pretty neat experience. I got to see a little bit more of England, went and traveled to London and Paris and Germany and some other places – Amsterdam...which was a lot more travel that we did that second time around than we did...when we were in England the first time. Once we were there – at that time frame, it was ok, again, I had grown up and started working, making my own money and then we left from there – my dad got orders to...Holloman Air Force Base in Alamogordo, New Mexico and that, for me – it was an ok time frame, but more of – not very happy and the reason why is because my parents wound up...getting a divorce...my dad wanted – my dad cheated and my mom was having none of it and so they wound up getting a divorce and so that was not the most pleasant time...in my life, but I made some friends that I've kept in contact with since then and then after that tour, my dad wound up retiring from the military. He's now in Florida with his new wife and my mom is here with me in Oklahoma!

She further described what it was like living in North Carolina:

Oh, it was awful! I was a little kid and like I said, I was a little sickly, there was a lot – there was allergies and other stuff going on and so...where we lived at, there would be a bus that would come through and pick us up and take us to school and so there was a girl right across the street from us who was probably maybe a year or two older, but she was also a bigger girl, so like – just taunting. If I wanted to get off the bus early, she would try to stop me and so my parents actually had to get involved and go across the street to her parents and said, if you don't leave my daughter alone, you're gonna have something to contend with...while I was in school, again – I think probably because I was sickly, just didn't make friends...easily at the time frame and it just wasn't – it just wasn't fun for me and so I think part of that stemmed from – like I said, I just didn't feel good and of course, I was going to doctors constantly. I remember having to do an allergy test on my back, had me in tears where they took a razor and they would put the allergen on it and then they would scrap your back to see what you reacted to...the other thing that was a big benefit that made me smile is my dad got a dog and I'll never forget him. He was a German Shepherd, his name was Duke and so...that said, Duke became my right or die little friend and we had a good ole time running up and down the backyard, playing and what not, and I do remember that my dad was deployed a lot more. I say deployed – he went on TDYs a lot more when we were in North Carolina – I'm not quite sure

what was going on or why, but he was deployed quite often and so it would be me and my mom kinda there, but he might be gone for like a week at a time, two weeks, come back and then...but Duke was right there making sure that we were safe and protected, but when we got ready to leave, it was a happy day, I think, for all of us. Me, my dad and my mom and we packed up and put our little U-Haul on the back and took off back towards Texas to visit folks and what not.

### **“Karen”**

Karen was 40 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Air Force for 28 to 30 years; she was not quite sure about the exact time. He served in Vietnam. The only other separation than Vietnam she remembered is a six months deployment. She was not sure how long her father was in Vietnam. Her family was her parents and a younger sister.

Karen recalled her father as being “very engaged.”

...He was very engaged...very, loved being in the Air Force, loved flying – he flew C130s and...was very involved in, as a military assistant to, I think, policy and commander in the leadership of airmen, but he was very much involved in home life, too, that when he could, he would come home and have dinner with us and my mom and him were definitely a team in raising us as we were growing and it was a team effort – like, the military wasn’t just him, it was a family effort. Meaning that as much as he could include – as much as decisions where we moved or timing of moves or explaining why we were moving or if he would be gone or TDY [Temporary duty at a base other than where regularly assigned. These were usually for short periods of time and the family did not accompany the service person], and those sort of things, they tried to include us into that decision-making factor and explained to us what was going on so we kinda really understood what it meant – when my dad was a Squadron Commander or Group Commander or Flight Commander, so we kinda felt like we were part of the process. It was a family effort.

Karen viewed her mother, both then and now, as a “constant support.”

...as she is now, she’s constant support and she basically...provided a great home – she was a teacher, had her Masters, she was well-educated and...I don’t know, basically was kinda the backbone of ensuring that the house kept going and our lives kept going and everybody was on schedule, whether that was us from sports to school to homework to my dad and being there for him and planning and

helping him do Commander duties, but she always, during the whole time, was – most of the majority of the time was able to maintain – she worked and maintained her career as teaching, as much as she could, when that allowed depending on where we lived.

Karen talks about her and her sister's experiences growing up:

... I think as with most kids, initially, with the first time you move, it's tough separating from the life you've known and growing up, but after that first move...even through our second and third moves, I don't think we – or at least I didn't really have a problem with it...enjoyed the adventure and...because I think because my parents explained it very well and...made sure that once we moved to a new place we were settled and set up and integrated into whatever community, I had no – I didn't have any problems...with moving. My sister is 35...and she's not in the military and I think...I think she would have similar – would think a little bit similar about moving around; however, by the time she was in high school, my dad had retired, so she – yeah, so she didn't have to worry about moving around in the military family at that point.

The family moved several times but usually to the same places.

So going back as far as I can remember...we've always lived between D.C., this area, northern Virginia and Germany was the two places we moved back and forth and so, D.C. – I lived here when I was in – so grade school up until about third grade and then we moved to Germany Rhein-Main and I was there from third to seventh grade maybe? And then we moved back to Virginia where I went to junior high until – I finished up ninth grade and then starting the year of my tenth grade, we moved over to Andrews Air Force Base and I went to...school out in Maryland and graduated and then when I went to college, my parents moved back over to Germany and I went to college in Boston.

### **“Veronica”**

The states in which Veronica lives and grew up are changed to protect her identity.

Veronica is 37. Veronica's stepfather was in the Marines. He became her step-parent after he left the service. Veronica was eight years old when her mother married her stepfather. She thinks he was in the service six or eight years, but she was not sure of this. Her stepfather served in Vietnam. Her separations from her stepfather were because he

went to therapy at VA hospitals. She remembers at least two of these separations. The separations were three to six months in length. Her stepfather left the Marines as a Sergeant. Veronica is one of four children. She has two older brothers and a twin sister.

When she was growing up, her family was “my mom, stepfather, my sister – well, it depends on which age you’re talking about. When we lived in Montana, just one of my older brothers was there.” Veronica and her stepfather “got along for the most part, I think better than the rest of my siblings, but he and I also fought the worst as well.” She explained the fighting: “Well, he had PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder], so when he and I fought, he and I fought – some of those fights were physical fights, so – but I think those related to his PTSD.” “I would like to hope that if he didn’t have PTSD, he wouldn’t have been such a jerk, but – I don’t know.”

I asked her what she meant when she said he was a jerk.

...I mean, he cussed a lot. I mean, when he was mean, he was really mean. There were times when – I remember one particular fight where he had his hands around my neck – that’s the kind of fights we’re talking about here. When my daughters ask me if I have a father, I tell them “no.”

I asked her why she said that. “Because he was a jerk and I don’t consider him a father figure in any way.” When they got along she said,

It was usually because I was doing something for him like cooking or ...being nice or he was in one of his good moods or having conversations about basketball – ok, basketball! When I played basketball, he was my coach. Not my actual coach, but he took me to like basketball courts and stuff during the summer, during the off-season, and helped me improve my basketball skills. But, unfortunately, the majority of the stuff I remember about him is him being a jerk.

Her stepfather was not yet diagnosed with PTSD when Veronica met him.

When I first met him, he didn’t come into my life until I was seven, I think – around those ages, but he didn’t get PTSD – he wasn’t diagnosed with PTSD until two or three years later? Something happened. I don’t remember exactly what

happened, but I guess it was a trigger for him and then he was sent – that was one of the times I remember him being gone when he was sent to the VA Hospital and then he was diagnosed with PTSD. And that’s actually when I remember him being ...a jerk. After that – I don’t remember him being that way so much beforehand, but after that, yeah.

Her stepfather was in the Infantry in the Marines. “The only thing that I know for sure is he was infantry and he did combat. He fought with guns and had to kill or be killed.” She thinks his PTSD was caused by his time in Vietnam...

...because on those times that he and I did get along, I remember him actually having those conversations with me about stuff that he had to kill or be killed, choosing whether he had to live or kill a kid and he would cry and get upset about it. So, I could only imagine being in a situation like that – that would cause the PTSD.

Her mother was a “hard worker.”

She worked most of the time I can remember. I don’t remember a time actually her being a stay-at-home mom. She worked all the time. Independent. She was a disciplinarian for sure. High expectations...there were times, I mean, I wouldn’t say that we were the hugging, loving type, but there were times when I would go and talk to her about whatever was going on. When the stepfather was in the VA, she was home. So we lived in Montana. We lived on a farm and she was there, but then I remember – I don’t know how many years after that – that’s when she started working all the time. She got a job, it was a really important job and she had to travel all over the place, so that’s when I remember her being gone the most is after that.

She described her mother being a disciplinarian.

She had high expectations. So like if you compare her to my stepfather – he was just mean, so you did what he wanted you to do because you didn’t want to get on his bad side and my mom had expectations like this is the stuff she expected us to do and so you wanted to live up to those expectations.

Her mother’s expectations included,

The grades, curfew, chores we had to do. I guess normal parent stuff. The stuff I have my kids do now, like I expect them to have good grades and they have chores and I expect them to listen, so things like that. I guess because I’m a mom now, it’s kind of hard...when I was growing up, I’m sure there were times when I was like Oh my God! You get mad at your

parents and you don't wanna do what they're telling you to do, but yeah there were times when I actually didn't do what she wanted me to do, but I figure – now I just think of it as a normal part of growing up and I'm sure at that time – I remember cooking dinner for the family because she was traveling or doing something for her work, so I did that a lot of times and cleaning...we didn't have to clean a lot because we had someone who actually came into the house to clean. But, like we were on a farm. I know we had chores we had to do and...she made us go outside a lot. I remember that...but, I just think of it as things that parents have their kids do.

Veronica has a sister.

Uh-huh – a twin. I have a twin sister...we – I mean, I always had somebody when I started a new place, I always had somebody there...we got along for the most part until probably high school and then there was probably...two or three years where we did not get along, we had separate friends and so we didn't really hang out that much together in high school. We had different circles of friends...but she was always that person – I always had someone else there with me, so –

Of her two older brothers, she described the one who is 10 years older and moved to Montana with the family this way:

I don't have too many fond memories of him being around, we fought most of the time, and I wouldn't say he was – I would say my oldest older brother was more caring than my second oldest brother. I don't remember specifics, I just remember that we fought about stuff.

The oldest brother, who is 13 years older than her, was in college in Illinois when the family moved to Montana.

Well, when we moved to – he's 12 years older than me, 13 years older than me so...he was –when we lived in Illinois he was in high school, I was in like second grade – maybe younger than that and when we moved to Montana, he was in college, so he was still in the state of Illinois going to college. He would come home...during the holidays and we always looked forward to him coming home and stuff and he would stay with us for – I don't know, I guess maybe a week or two during Christmas break or Thanksgiving break or whatever...but he wasn't there while we were growing up.

Veronica described the family's travels.

We lived on Mayford Drive...we probably – let me think, if I remember correctly – I mean my sister and I were pretty much born when we lived on Mayford Drive and we lived there until we were nine...and actually the reason why we moved to Montana had to do with the fact that he had some kind of a job that had to do with military – that ended up making us go to Montana. It was either Germany or Montana and I have no idea why my parents picked Germany, but they picked Germany – I mean, they picked Montana over Germany – I mean, I don't know – I mean, if I could go back I would have said let's go to Germany, but whatever, but then I wouldn't know my husband, so...so we ended up in Montana because of military-related – I just don't know, I can't remember pieces of that, but anyway, living in Illinois – I mean, my sister and I went to elementary school, we knew the kids in our neighborhood, we played with them all the time...we were what you call latch-key kids, so we would come home – my sister and I – I always had my sister, so we would come home after school, we let ourselves in, we watched TV or do whatever it is that we needed to do until my mom or my brother came home. I remember that...then when we were in the fourth grade – so 1989, we moved to Montana...it was actually the first time I remember having to deal with racism was when we moved to Montana, which surprises me because there's a military base there, but I remember – again I had my sister with me...we went to an elementary school – when we first moved to Montana, we lived in a hotel which for kids is a pretty cool thing – the Holiday Inn and I think we stayed there for a month until my parents found us a place a little bit outside of town and...at that elementary school – there's an elementary school right by the hotel and that was the first time we ever heard the “n” word was at that school...so that was our first dealing with racism, but then I think we lived there for 30 days and then we moved to a town outside of town – a house outside of town and that was the first time that we saw buffalo because our neighbors had four buffalo at the top of this hill – my sister and I decided to climb and all of a sudden we look over and we thought they were cows, but they were buffalo! So that was the first time – city kids transported into Montana, so that was our experience! And we did – I mean, we were outside a lot in Illinois, I know that, but when we got to Montana, there's just more to do – my sister and I were always outside. The house we were at was a two level house...and it was really cool because it had a creek behind it and we literally had to climb up this hill – that was our backyard, this really tall hill, but we played outside and we got to know the other kids in our...street, if you wanna call it a street – it was a gravel road, but in our street and it was the first time that I remember going camping outside – we camped out at a person's house across from us in their backyard and one of the families was – I don't know if they were Mormon, but they had like eight kids and I remember they had their house stocked in case the world came to the end – like that's the thing I remember about them the most...and I also remember the school that we went to when we lived at that house was

called Bells School...and a little bit down the way, there was a guy who was a taxidermist which was the first time I had ever learned about people who actually stuff animals for a living...and we stayed there for the second half of our fourth grade. So we moved to Montana in the middle of our fourth grade year and so we stayed at that school – so we were at three schools our fourth grade year – Harcourt in Illinois, then we moved to the school that was right by the hotel, then we moved to Bells School so that year we had three schools and then we moved after our fourth grade year to (a new town), which is a town of 800 and we were the only Black family in that town and we lived 20 miles from town and we literally lived in the country. We had a house that was on 40 acres and our closest neighbor was half a mile away. You take city kids, you put them in the country – that’s what we had. They had cows and hay and tractors and trucks and all that stuff. Farming...so we learned all about farming there! Oh, and that – we lived there from fifth grade to the middle of eighth grade and our closest neighbors were (the “Smiths”) and they became our grandparents because we didn’t have our grandparents with us and they treated us like their grandkids...yeah. Very sweet...grandparents, and their grandkids – or little grandson “Roy” was our first friends there, if you will. He came and played with us outside, so again, we were outside and we got to ride a tractor with them and we saw cows being born and we got to jump hay bales and all that stuff...and I - that’s where I learned how to play saxophone when I was going to elementary school there and snow – of course you have snow in Montana – lots of it...our cat – our first animals we got in Montana,...played basketball...my sister was on the dance team and then...my mom – at this time, or somewhere in all of this, I don’t remember exactly where – she went back to school to get her Bachelor’s – yeah, she had to have, so she went back to school to get her Bachelor’s –I don’t remember the time frame, but I know that she got a job...a really important job somewhere in the eighth grade because I remember moving in the middle of eighth grade and we moved to Helena...and when we moved to Helena, which is about an hour away from [where the family was living], it’s a bigger town, I guess city in Montana, the capital. We went to Catholic school. So we went to Catholic school for the second half of our eighth grade year and all of our freshman year...in Helena. So we were in Helena for a year and a half. Yeah, we were in Helena for a year and a half and then my mom got moved to (a moderate-sized town in Montana) because that’s where her job was supposed to be, I think – I don’t know if I’m remembering all of this correctly, but she was the...President and CEO, I think, of a political subdivision. Again, a town of about 16,000 and we were the only Black family there and my mom had a very important job, so that puts us even more on the radar for people and my sister and I were sophomores when we moved there...the first year we were there, learning new school, new people, friends...I don’t really remember much of my sophomore year, just getting to know people. We were in choir, band, I played basketball,



my sister was on the dance team or I think she was trying form a dance team, something like that – so we were in all kinds of activities...which kept us busy and my sister had her driver's license because she got her driver's license her freshman year. I didn't get my driver's license until I was a senior, but she got her driver's license her freshman year so we could drive to school...and we were in town, we didn't take a bus, we drove to school and then somewhere because sophomore, junior year...and I'll just speak for myself, I won't speak for my sister – I switched the type of friends I had and so instead of being in sports, I was no longer in sports and I was no longer really listening to the rules like I was supposed to be and I was probably no longer getting good grades like I was supposed to – I actually remember my mom having to come up to the high school a couple of times – it would have been sophomore year, the end of sophomore year, maybe beginning of junior year because I wasn't – I don't know, maybe I was skipping school or classes or something, I don't remember – anyway...junior year, end of junior year maybe – I can't remember exactly – I got pregnant...and my mom clearly against abortion – my stepdad wanted me to have an abortion – I don't even think I had a second guess – I don't remember, I might have – but I didn't, I had my son...and the person that I was with at the time – I told him – I think he wanted me to have one and I told him I was keeping the baby, so there's that. Anyway...I remember – I remember still the day that my mom found out – it was my brother – it was my oldest brother's birthday and he called and as I'm wishing him a happy birthday, I'm also telling him at the same time that I'm pregnant, I was in my bathroom, my bedroom bathroom and at that moment within five minutes, my mom called me into her room, she asked me if I was pregnant, couldn't really lie about it because eventually, she would have noticed and so, then...we had to deal with all that, so I had my son the summer before my senior year and...luckily, I will say now as an adult, that [city] had...programs in place for teenage moms and there were a lot of teenage moms in my class...and so daycare was paid for, gas was paid for...so I could continue going to school and so I graduated with a baby...and of course, I didn't really go out as much and I don't think my sister and I – well, our relationship improved a little bit because I had her nephew and stuff, so she was around a little bit more and my mom actually still let me – it was like a balance between being a teenage mom and having a teenage life, so every once in a while, I do remember that I was able to go out and hang out with my friends and stuff, but I remember – I remember – I think this was the first time she got called out of town...senior year might have just started – she got called out of town for work and I had to go pick up my son because he had a fever and my mom wasn't home. I mean, obviously, I got through it, but I just remember being nervous about it and everything, so that was Montana and then senior year, mom was very adamant about us not staying in the state of Montana for college, so...I don't remember the process or anything, but I ended up applying to [a

private college] at the time in Illinois and my sister ended up getting accepted into [a public college], so we went back to Illinois for our first year of college. She went to [a public college] which was in (a small town) and I went to [a private college] which was in Illinois, so we were – first time ever separated. She was an hour away from me and I was in Illinois and I actually lived with my cousin that first year of college in Illinois, so it was in the city with a toddler going to school for the first time. So that's what I remember.

Veronica told about her first experience with racism.

So first time experience in Montana – I don't remember and I don't remember the name of the school, I wish I did – so there was that school that was by the hotel, then we moved outside of [that city] and we went to Bells School – I don't remember it so much at Bells School, but I remember my mom came during Black History Month and she gave a whole presentation – I don't know if she still has the posters, but she gave a whole presentation on Black history at that school. I don't remember experiencing it so much there...when we moved to [a new town] – I know that we did, but it wasn't – it was ignorance, I think, more than anything else, so I remember people saying, 'can I touch your hair?' and 'where are you from?' and 'you must be really good at basketball,' and things like that in [the new town]...I don't remember it so much in Helena...but we went to Catholic schools – I don't know if that had anything to do with it. We had really good friendships in the house that we lived in the neighborhood. I mean, when we lived in Helena, my sister and I...during the summer months, like before school started, we developed this whole like way for the kids in the neighborhood to raise money, so at the end of the year, at the end of the summer, we could get a limo ride and go to the movies, so we had really good friendships with the kids in our neighborhood there and in [that city] – I know that we did, but the situation was kind-of different because of the position my mom had, so everybody knew who she was, everybody knew who we were and I think it was more along the lines of I wanna be friends with the Black kids – because we were the only Black kids – and their mom has a really good position, so they're not poor Black kids, so we were popular for that reason. I don't think – I honestly am not – I'm only friends with two people that I can think of off the top of my head that I went to high school with and I'm married to one of them, so – (laughter).

### **“Jane”**

Jane was 37 years old at the time of her interview. Her mother was in the Army Reserve Nurse Corp. Her mother served for 30 years, including in Desert Storm. She was

separated from her mother only once for one year. While her mother was in the service her family was her parents and two brothers. Jane is the middle child.

Her mother worked as a Nurse and Nurse Practitioner as a civilian, and as an Army Reserve Nurse. She had to go once a month for service. Twice her mother went to AET (Acquisition Education and Training) for two weeks each time. She was deployed for one year for Desert Storm. Her mother was “always there” with the family except for these times. When Jane would wake up in the mornings, her mother would be there. Her mother fixed the meals, went to work, and came home. The children would share about their days, do homework, and on the weekends they would be joined by grandparents and other family members.

Jane’s mother started her career working in the Emergency Room, then moved to other areas, and now she is in Pediatrics. She was also on the Board of Nurses. She has had various jobs in the military—from commanding as a Battalion Commander, Gate Commander to Instructor—and in her civilian nursing job working as a nurse, a supervisor, and nurse practitioner in different areas.

Her father worked for the Talladega Correctional Facility for 27 years. He worked out of town but he was always present for them. He got the children ready in the morning and when he got home around 10:00 pm, the children would be in bed. “It was a two parent family home.” Jane grew up with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They did not live together, “but everybody was so close.” On Saturdays they went to choir practice and on Sundays they always had Sunday dinner. Her upbringing was “cultural southern Alabama Black. Traditional.”

Her older brother is her “best friend.” All the children are five years apart. When they were growing up she and her older brother “were always pulling pranks.” She said that both her parents worked hard and “we couldn’t do the things that we do with our kids now – we just put them in so much extracurricular.” So, they pulled pranks. Her “baby brother” was born when Jane was five years old. He is an introvert, “very, very quiet and stuff, so he wasn’t into the prank playing. He just likes to sit.” Jane and the older brother played video games. The younger brother would “just sit there.”

Jane still has her best friend from kindergarten. Her parents instilled in her the value of friendships. She said that she is “outgoing” and was outgoing as a child. She “just likes to do things.” She had no disciplinary problems at school. She went to public schools through high school. Her greatest challenge was to “make sure every class I had was with her best friend.” That was important to her.

Her first memories of her mother being in the military are when she was in middle school. Jane said she was a “momma’s girl.” She always liked to be around her mother. Her mother took her to the library when she was studying for her master’s degree. Her mother told her this is where she was supposed to study and to prepare. At that time her mother was teaching nursing. Her mother also took on command roles. She remembers her mother telling her that she [her mother] was in charge of “allll” of these people. Her mother showed Jane pictures of the people under her command to give Jane an idea of her [mother’s] responsibilities. Her mother took Jane to all the military functions that she could. She would travel with her mother to Washington, D.C. and Jane remembered being able to order “stuff” at the hotels and watch TV. The only places Jane could not go with her mother was to “cool places like Panama.” Jane recalled thinking, “oh my gosh, I

have got to join the military.” She said her mother was patient with her. One thing in particular that Jane retained is that people who knew her mother would tell Jane, “Oh! You’re such and such’s daughter! I love your mom!” These were former students, who would say her mother was patient with them.

Her family “only lived in one place.” They did not “bounce from house to house and districts” because her mother was not on Active Duty. She said that her older brother tells her that when her mother was on Active duty they stayed with her grandmother in the “projects” in Alabama. This was the paternal grandmother. There are 10 brothers and sisters each in her father’s and mother’s families. At the time Jane and her brothers lived with her grandmother, her uncles and aunts were still in their teens, so they grew up together. Jane remembered that her grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins were always around. They grew up as one, big family.

What stood out in Jane’s mind about growing up in a military family was that she “really enjoyed every single time there was ‘Diamond and Organizational Days,’ a military function her mother took her to at every opportunity. “They were the best because there were these group of kids from people and nobody looks like you and they’re from all over and you are just having the best time!” Her mother took her to the reserve units’ Christmas parties, Thanksgiving meals, and other “nice extravaganzas” on the various bases.”

### **“Monica”**

Monica was 32 years old at the time of her interview. To describe where home was when she was growing up, she told me,

Well, let me put it to you like this – given the fact that we moved around so much, in ’95 my dad finally retired. My mom returned to the state of

Texas and so I've always considered Texas to be home from the age of probably about 10 years, up until I was somewhere just in my 20s or so.

Monica said "I was technically born into it [the military]. For the first 10 years of my life, I spent it being a military child." When she was growing up, the family was her parents and an older sister. "We did have two older brothers, but they were from previous relationships that both of our parents had and so, by the time frame [my] parents got together and had us, they were – the brothers were living elsewhere." Monica is the youngest child in the family.

Her father was in the Air Force for 30 years. She remembered that her father went to the Azores and she thinks he was in Vietnam. "I'll say yes [that he was in combat], but he didn't really talk a lot about that. It was just the fact that he went, but didn't really say much about it." There were times that he was separated from the family on TDY, usually stateside. She and her mother accompanied him. Her older sister was in college at that time. The longest separation that she remembered was 30 days.

Monica described her father this way: "He seemed very...dedicated to his job, providing for his family and being very, very involved with his faith." She said that her father used the military service for lessons.

The thing that stood out the most is...it seemed like in his own way, he would use the military service – this may sound strange, but he would use the military service to, I guess, to teach me lessons about life – things about perseverance, sometimes sharing stories with me about what he went through when he was..., going through his basic training and sometimes how things might get a little difficult or he would share stories about...he was stationed at different bases before he got married to my mother, as a young trooper – sharing stories with me about being responsible and things like that, so what I walked away with was that pretty much No. 1, life is what you make it, but also No. 2 that... you learn – you can learn lessons, regarding life from anywhere and from everywhere and...so that was pretty much the thing that stood out, to me the most and...yeah, and sometimes he would come by – when he was

working on the flight line, he had been given – I guess you could say it was like a Hummer or a Humvee – I don't know how you describe it – it was a flight line vehicle and sometimes he would come by the house and pick me up in it and take me out, show me what he did and how he did it...again, I think that just came from having pride in his work and wanted to share that pride with his family...I remember that standing out in my mind, but really, the thing I remember the most is the fact of his teaching me life lessons...just using his own examples from the military.

I asked her to explain what she meant by perseverance.

Yeah, but – perseverance, but also to – even as a young child teach me about management styles and skills... also teaching me how to work with other people – team work, but also how to work independently if need be... help me understand how my role whether in society, in family life, whether it was in work life, how my role made a difference and positioned me – I worked as a volunteer for like a – function of keeping an area beautiful by helping out to pick up trash outside – just helping me to understand how my role – whether small or insignificant actually winds up making a great impact because of helping to save the environment, for example. Something like that – and then also he taught me a lot about dedication, once you start something – if you are going to be with it, to be able to stick with it, if you're not, then don't get into it...and also taught me about finding my own self and understanding what my limits were, what my strengths were, what my weaknesses were, identify limits and weaknesses, working on those or just saying, 'you know what? I've worked on it, I've tried, but my talents lie elsewhere.' And just really getting to know myself and who I am as an individual.

This is how Monica spoke of her mother.

So she was an industrious homemaker who would sometimes go out and would work on what we would call – when we lived in England on economy, but that usually happened after I got a little bit older and was in school...but most of the time I remember her being an industrious homemaker...who made sure that the home fires remained burning for me and my sister... she understood that dad was part of a military organization, she understood that he had an important role whether it was being crew chief or later on when he got promoted into more office level work, she understood that he had a mission to take up there, so she was always in the background providing the home support. And so it was almost like this partnership between she and my dad where it was like he went out and worked and earned the money and she would make sure that the house was taken care of, bills were taken care of – things like that...I remember her also being very devout about her faith – both she and my dad identified as non-denominational Christian and so I do remember her

in her own ways, too...teaching me about not only how to be ladylike... ladylike – knowing how to act properly in public, so to speak, but she also taught me things such as... being able to take care of myself, being able to be self-efficient, so that could include things like cooking, or being self-efficient like, ‘hey, Monica, have you ever noticed that maybe emotionally you’re a little down? Take a little time, figure out why, what’s going on, what’s taking place there, and really get to know yourself in that way.’ The other thing I remember about her, she could be fun because ...she has stories with me about not only how she grew up, but sometimes, for example, she’ll be dancing from her time [doing dances that were popular ]. I remember one time specifically she even taught me how...they used to do – I think it was the Charleston that she used to do with my grandma – there was this one time she took me around – showed me how to do that – she could be fun... in her own way...I do remember her being very disciplined...as it regarded that, so I think it was probably where I got a lot of my discipline from...and I do also remember her... always wanting – just wanted to teach me something – well, teach my sister, too – wanted to impart knowledge in some way or in some form...trying to think what else do I remember? Oh yeah, when I was in the fourth grade, she decided she was going to homeschool me and she did that up until I graduated from high school, so when she took on that role, I do remember her being very...encouraging, but at the same time being very rigid...and...and strict when it came to...making sure that I got my work done, had to get my work done on time and making sure that I was progressing in classes as I needed to, because for her, education was a really, really big deal and...she definitely wanted to make sure that I – that I was doing one hundred percent when it came to that.

“Tracie” is Monica’s older sister. Monica says this about Tracie:

Yeah! So I remember my sister being a very industrious person, also very adventurous...very curious, lots of fun and was really always trying to expand her knowledge and information. I think for my sister the world is a place to be explored and if you’re gonna do that, you should do that fully and so she as always kind-of seeking adventures where, for example, you do – she attended regular high school, by the way...so for example, sometimes she had excursions. She would go on those...I remember her being a member of Track & Field which she enjoyed – I also remember her being a member of baking contests...as part of a Home Economics course she took while she was there in high school – I just remember her being very adventurous, but also being very curious about the world around her and wanted to understand why – why were things the way that they were or really trying to understand and know herself, too. What’s another thing I should remember...at some time frame she was taking us with her if we were going out – let’s say she convenience store or going out shopping, she thought she would take us with her and she would show



me...tricks of the trade when it came to shopping and staying within budget, for example...and also showed me, too, about ways to be more in tune with myself, but would also – would encourage me not to be afraid of-- of taking risks, not to be afraid to learn, also encouraged me not to be afraid of myself... really get to know myself and getting an understanding of who I was and who I am as an individual in the world.

Tracie is 13 years older than Monica but Tracie always stayed in touch with her.

Yeah, pretty much kept in touch...always...she was – if it wasn't a phone call, if there wasn't a care package my way, then it would be cards, she'd send letters – it was definitely an active relationship. We still have one, by the way, so definitely an active relationship...she has always been very family-oriented as I have been, too, and so one of the things she values the most is family, friendship and close connections. She also values her faith, too, and so she is the type of person who believes if you are – if you have been blessed with people in your life, then you need to do whatever you can to keep that up, keep that going, and I agree with her on that. And so she definitely does a very, very good job of that...we've always been close as siblings, so...I often refer to her as my alternate mother (laughter) – I can go in and just bawl to her, so about something (laughter), to listen to my needs and understand what was going on with me and at the same time if I needed some correction, she wasn't afraid, I'd get that look, 'Monica, that's not cool, so don't do that,' but, the thing is she definitely has kept in contact with me and I enjoy that because when your own sibling – you idolized your sibling and you have a one of them and then they leave you to go off to college and you understand why, but still, when they go to college and you begin to miss them – you miss them a lot and so the fact that she would be so willing to take time out of her busy schedule and, remember she meant a lot to me...especially during a time frame when parents were, you kinda get to that point where you can tell they're getting tired of their marriage to one another, they're just going in different directions and so having her there as a big support – not only as it began to happen, but as they went through their divorce, separation and then after the fact meant a big, big deal to me, so–

This was Monica's self-description:

(laughter) Well, let's see, probably rambunctious, but very curious, I guess, if I could describe myself in one word and I say curious because I was always trying to learn what had not been taught to me... and I think a lot of that just came from seeing the example from my dad, my mom, my sister – just seeing... their dedication to knowing themselves and getting to know themselves – that just inspired a natural curiosity in me not only to know myself, but the ones around me and not just be content with knowing what I knew, so for example, I remember being in – gosh, was it

first grade, I think, or second grade and we hadn't exactly started on multiplication just yet – obviously, cause, most people around third grade – well, I skipped the third grade, went to fourth, so yeah, it was second grade... I was interested in wanting to learn about multiplication because I was like, well, it seems like a form of addition to me, so how do you do it – even though, like I said, my other classmates – they were more interested in learning how to do addition and stuff like that, so I'd come home and try to find ways to learn about things that were just really beyond – I guess you could say maybe my age range, but again, it just came from being just naturally curious. The other side of myself – I remember being smart... just being recognized for those abilities... but I think a lot of it came from, again, being curious and picking up books sometimes and reading different subjects – reading different things and from there wanting to learn more about what I had read about if it happened to spark my interest... I also had my fun times, but I think out of everybody, I was probably maybe the most reflective or a little bit more reflective from what I also remember, so there wasn't a time frame where I didn't have a pen and a pad or a diary... I kept stashed in my desk drawer and I would sometimes scribble out my thoughts going through the day or what I'd seen or maybe just write down something I thought just really struck me... maybe I didn't write as specifically as I should have, but I do remember being reflective and trying to understand emotions and then the other thing I remember, too, is being very creative... I liked being able to think about something and then try to execute that idea so whether it was coming up with a Lego – a design using Legos... or maybe it was – there's a computer program we had – it was an art program that I used to love to make up little different art things with... as a child and... so being creative was a thing I remember about myself.

She described her outside activities as being different from her sister's school-related activities. She took piano lessons.

Not really other than piano lessons. I think a lot of that may have come from, I don't know if this was maybe my mom just trying to make me into an artsy person because she was like, 'well, she's creative, so let's take her into the arts,' or what that really was – I don't know, maybe if there was a little slight sense of control there, too, from my mom's aspect, because her stating that she had taken piano lessons as a child, but she didn't complete her piano lessons because she didn't want to and so I don't know if maybe there was an aspect of control that grew up inside of her that if you ever have a child, you're gonna make that child complete piano lessons because it was something she didn't [finish] I don't know, but... I wasn't really involved in a lot of things outside of that – like I said piano lessons was mainly it- I mean, I did have friends that I would play with, things like that, but as far as extracurriculars go, my main extracurricular – if they

weren't through the correspondence course via homeschool, then that was pretty much about it and a lot of the extracurriculars that were through the homeschool course, they were very academic...things like speech...things like typing things such as a CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] course...and so even thinking about that – I know I'm gonna digress here for a minute, but even thinking about that, I'm starting to wonder if maybe again, the reason why I wasn't allowed to participate in a lot of extracurricular activities because mom feeling I was this gifted child, if I want to say that – maybe thought it would be much better if I benefited from just academic pursuits and really not worry too much about other more socially-based pursuits.

Her parents were no longer married when Monica completed high school.

*No*, they were not. No – after I was in fifth grade, I think, around the time when they finally went ahead and called it quits...because around 1994 is when the marriage kinda just started going into its final stages and in 1995, April 1995 my grandmother passed and shortly after April 1995, dad in June retired after 30 years of service in the Air Force, so it was at that time they went ahead and went their own different ways and in 1996 is when the divorce came through, and I graduated high school, like I said in 2002, so yeah, they were – they were divorced by the time I graduated high school. So what happened is after the divorce took place, we moved to Texas and I remember dad came to Texas to help us get set up and then he went...back to New Mexico to out process [complete all paperwork necessary to leave the military] at that time in the Air Force where people when they were retiring, they had to out process so he went back to New Mexico and after that point, he moved on to – I don't remember if it was Pennsylvania and then Florida or Florida then Pennsylvania, but I know - she pretty much... went to their separate states and while they may have had joint custody of me, the person I lived with was my mother and I did not see my father a lot and part of that reason is he remarried to my stepmother who happened to be also in the Air Force and so there was a time in her career – she is now retired, by the way – but there was a time in my stepmother's career where they were transferred to – I think it was Japan, so, for whatever reason he was not going to send for me to come and visit them over in Japan, so no, I did not see him a lot...as a matter of fact, the way that we kept in contact following that divorce – it started out with phone calls and then, like I said, as they started to progress and get more serious and what have you, then went to letters and after letters it was like we had a break in contact for a good few years and then we really did not reconnect until 2008...when I was in my early 20s and I just graduated from college, so –

Monica has two older brothers who were not involved in her life. “Jim” is 17 years older and “Mike” is 15 years older.

Not really and that’s because they both came out of previous relationships my parents had had, so my mom had a previous relationship and of course my dad – my dad had been married before prior to my mother and so I don’t really remember having interactions with Mike – that would have been the son my dad had with his first wife – other than I think we may have talked to him a couple of times on the phone – I remember him being a very nice guy, a very warm guy, but as far as growing up with him, I don’t remember that. My brother Jim, I remember him a lot more in the picture and that’s just because he and my mother – they kind-of stayed in little more closer contact and I think part of that was because of the fact mom was always trying to establish a close relationship with grandma, so she would have contact with her and because my older brother lived with my grandmother, she was able to speak with Jim a little more often to see what was going on with him a lot more often and also, too, there was a time back in the late 80s, mid to late 80s, we were stationed at Reese Air Force Base, which is closed now, – we lived in Lubbock, Texas and my mom’s brother – my grandmother lived in Midland, Texas, and so I know that just about every weekend we were on the road to Midland to see my grandmother while we were stationed in Lubbock and my brother would be there at the time – that was until he joined the Navy himself in the late 80s, but before that...he would be there so we could see him and then have contact with him like that and of course he would be home on leave after joining the Navy while we were still there in the area he would go home and of course, got in contact with him that way, so that’s the reason maybe we saw him more because of the close relationship, well not really close, but more proximity was part of it, but the other side of it, too, was my mother – she being in contact with my grandmother quite often.

Monica’s family lived in Texas, England, and New Mexico. While they were stationed at Reese Air Force Base, near Lubbock, Texas, her father was a crew chief on the flight line. “He landed a lot of jets, overseeing the repairs of planes, making sure that the maintenance was done correctly.” When that base closed, the family transferred to Upper Heyford, England. Her father had a different job working in an office. Monica is not sure what his job was but she remembered that he was no longer on the flight line. She said that

...around 2008, 2009, he and I were having a conversation and he brought up that he worked when he was in England with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). He didn't go into a lot of detail as to what that job actually entailed or what he actually had to do.

She remembers that his job in England was secretive. It seemed like this was high level work. Towards the end of her father's career the family visited Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, which is the home of Air Force Special Operations Command. They settled at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, home of the stealth fighter. While at Holloman AFB, her father became the Senior Enlisted Advisor. What this meant "is that he was the Commander's right hand man. If there was an issue that came up on the base that needed to be handled, he would help." "It was a pretty high ranking position; came with a house, a rather nice house, and some other perks and things like that."

#### **"Chandler"**

Chandler was 24 years old at the time of her interview. Her father was in the Air Force for 32 years. He retired as a Major General. Her father was not in combat after she was born. The longest period she remembered her father being separated from the family is three months, though he was separated many times from the family. Her family was her mother and father. Chandler is an only child.

She described her father as very dedicated:""

Well, he was very dedicated to his military service...he was very passionate about being in the Air Force...he was a great father, a great provider for the family. He was always available to me even when he was away on business. I knew I could always reach him...and he always would take time on the weekends to make sure he spent time with me, so pretty much every Saturday we would do something together. We would go to the movies together a lot, we would always have some activity on the weekend, so he would make sure to give me, like, time and focused attention...and also he and my mother would go to dinner every Friday night, pretty much, like, no matter what.

My mom was...a flight attendant up until I was born and her plan originally was to continue working after I was born...but it didn't wind up working out because my dad was always traveling and she would have always been traveling as a flight attendant and in Europe where we were living at the time, so I was born in Germany – in order to have a nanny or au pair...you have to give them power of attorney, so that if anything were to happen to me and needed to go to the hospital, they'd be able to make medical decisions and my mom was not comfortable with that, so she decided to retire...stay at home with me...because my grandparents couldn't stay with me either because all my grandparents at the time were living in America, so it just – there was really no other option...so she wound up retiring and staying at home with me...throughout my childhood, so she was a stay-at-home parent, like the lead parent of the household and so she was...always coming to school to volunteer and she was always like the classroom mom and things like that, so she was very present my entire life.

Chandler was born when her father was stationed in Germany, though she remembers frequent moves while growing up. She describes her father's role in the military: "...he was involved in space and missiles program so he did a lot with launching missiles into space."

... I just know that when we were living in Florida when I was really, really little, we were actually – this was before a lot of the security protocols changed, so I was actually able – my mom and I and like family were actually able to go to the base and like watch missiles launch...so I know that I did that when I was little, but I was so young I really don't remember it...but now I think security protocols are different – you're not allowed to do that anymore...but I remember – so I understood he was involved with launching like missiles and satellites – like into space.

Chandler has some memories of the places that they lived.

...Well, there's a few of the earliest places I really don't have much memory of...but some of the ones I have clearer memories of when we lived in Florida...I was young, but I wasn't the biggest fan because there was a lot of – I had a lot of skin issues when I was a child, so...in Florida, it was just so humid and like muggy and like damp in the air that it kind-of exacerbated some of like my skin issues, so I would have rashes a lot...so I wasn't a fan of living there...and like there was a lot of snakes and things, I remember, so my mom was worried about us going in the backyard and stuff like that, so...yeah, I was not the biggest fan of Florida, but I just remember things like that, I don't really remember people or school or anything...then when I was a teenager, we lived in Nebraska for two years – that was one of the longest times I lived anywhere...and that's

where I went to high school the first two years...and I went to third and fourth grade in Biloxi, Mississippi...and that was an interesting experience because it was obviously like very deep south...but my parents kind-of protected me from a lot of things cause I know there was some...issues with like Ku Klux Klans [KKK] and the letters to our house...threatening letters and the FBI had to get involved with that, but after the FBI got involved it stopped...but when we were living in Biloxi for a while until they found the source of the threatening, like racist letters that were coming to the house, my parents needed to have a bodyguard and my mother and I had to have a bodyguard provided by the military because of the threatening nature of the letters...so I didn't even know what he was there for. I didn't know that he was a bodyguard – my parents told me – they made up some reason why he had to come to school with me, I really don't remember what they told me, you'd have to check with my mom, but at first I didn't know why he was there, but eventually they told me he was actually a bodyguard for security purposes...and so he had to come to school with me, he had to come to my swim meets, like we literally had around-the-clock security, but eventually the FBI was very on top of it and they actually were able to trace – based on something crazy like the type of paper the letter was written on, they managed to trace it back to the man that was sending it...and so they told him you have to stop, this is illegal, etc. and then it stopped, so eventually we did not need the security detail anymore...but my parents did a really impressive job of hiding that from me cause like I really didn't know about any of the letter – I didn't know about any of it and then when I was older they told me that we had gotten threatening emails – or threatening letters in the mail from the KKK...like just like graphic threatening messages...so I didn't know about any of that at the time, so my experience there was fairly pleasant, actually made friends, everything was good at school. I went to a Catholic school when we lived in Biloxi...cause my parents were wanting me to have a good education, so I actually went to [a] Catholic School for two years and that was third and fourth grade but then we moved after those two years...and then, yeah, the next place I have clear, clear-cut memory of is...Omaha, Nebraska, where we lived for two years in my first two years of high school – that was actually my dad's last...military assignment was there.

I asked her about where she lived between Mississippi and Nebraska.

I don't remember what ages I was, but I lived in Colorado. Colorado Springs, Colorado when I was – trying to think of what grade I was in at the time. I believe that was middle school – that was when I would have been in about sixth grade. Colorado Springs, Colorado and my mom actually pulled me out of middle school because there was a just a lot of – just like inappropriate things happened in middle school, like kids' behavior was getting kinda out of control and my mom didn't really want me to be around that, so...I went to sixth grade and then she pulled me out

for seventh and eighth grade and I was homeschooled....so I spent a lot of time being homeschooled...those two years, so I had friends from around the base, but I didn't have a lot of social interaction with the school. I had a couple of best friends who lived on base with us that I would hang out with, but other than that, I was at home.

Chandler said this about a home town:

I really didn't have one – just because I was literally – every one to two years, I was moving, so I really didn't establish feeling like a home base, so I just considered home wherever my parents lived, like that was home, so wherever we were at the moment was home. ...my dad retired at Nebraska and we moved to upstate New York. I did my last years of high school there.

What stands out to Chandler about growing up in a military family is being adaptable.

Yeah, I'd say the biggest thing that like stays with me and will probably be in my nature is that I'm very, very deeply adaptable...for example, I went to college in D.C. I went to American University and then I joined a teaching program, an alternative certification program that operated either in D.C. – they had a branch that operated in D.C. and a branch that operated in Baltimore and I really wanted to be accepted into the program and they asked me at my final interview would you prefer to be in D.C. or Baltimore and I did not – I genuinely didn't have a preference. I'd been in D.C. for four years at that point and I was perfectly willing to pack up and move to Baltimore, and I credit that to honestly the military life of. I understand that you can make – like the experience will be what you make of it, so if you move to any place it can be great or it can be terrible based on your attitude, so I had no problem saying, sure I'll move to Baltimore, no problem, then they chose me and they said I was going to Baltimore and here I am three years later still happy, so I think that's the biggest like impact that being from a military family has had on me as I am very – I do like to make plans and I'm very regimented and I get that from my father, but I'm also very adaptable, so I'm a very interesting mix of loving a plan, but not being married to it.

### **“Taylor”**

Taylor was 21 years old at the time of her interview. Her family lived in Germany for 10 years while her father was in the Army. The family then moved to Oklahoma, while her father was still in the service. He was in service, as Taylor put it: “I



wanna say – 14 years.” He was a chef while in the Army and she does not think he served in combat. Although Taylor said that her father did not serve in combat, from her description of his responsibilities he might have been in combat. “I think he was just deployed with the soldiers and just as a cook for them.” She remembers only one of his locations and that was Turkey.

The family was her parents, an older sister, and two adopted sisters. Taylor is the youngest child. She was born in Maryland. Her mother is from “the islands – Dominica, and my father was from New York.”

She speaks of her father warmly:

...Me and my father were like best friends...so yeah, I was definitely was really close with him...I felt like we were able to talk to each other pretty openly, I had a pretty open relationship with both of my parents. However, I clinged to my father more. So yeah-

Her mother:

...Currently...she’s my best friend and (laughter) – growing up we never really got along (laughter) – that’s a weird concept. You never get along with your parents, so...yeah, so I was a pretty stubborn child, so I understand why there were complications...so now she’s my best friend, I confide in her about every and anything and yeah, we have a pretty open relationship, still understanding, of course, she’s my mother and so I still do have certain restrictions. However, she is my best friend.

Her adopted sisters are also cousins from Dominica; there is 15 to 20 years difference in the ages between Taylor and her adopted sisters.

So there’s “Mary” and “Sandra.” They are – they are pretty awesome people. I didn’t know them that well as a child cause they’re from the islands and they went back when I was about seven...so we keep in touch – I probably talk to them like once or twice a year, but my mom talks to them pretty frequently, so I only hear about them through my mother...but yeah – ...my mom and my dad adopted them so they could become U.S. citizens.

This is how Taylor described herself growing up: "...I was a really bad child (laughter). So yeah, yeah, I was pretty stubborn...I thought I knew everything...yeah!"

I asked her to be more specific.

Ok, I had a pretty sharp tongue...so, yeah, I'm trying to think...I just...oh gosh...even just – this is just a basic – I think all children understand this – like when you want someone to stay the night at your house, you ask your parents in front of your friends (laughter) – I literally did that every time (laughter) so my parents would always feel compelled to say yes at times, and then a couple times they were like, you're cut-off, you can't say – so I was – I was gonna ask them in front of my friends cause then they'll say yes! If I don't, then they'll say no, so (laughter) – that was me as a child. Not the best.

She also has another older sister.

She is 27...and we're pretty – we're not the closest – we never really were close, however, we were raised – you don't have to like your sister, you don't have to be close, but you do have to love her and respect that this is your family, so that's kinda how I was raised with that and so I do love her and if she ever needed anything, I'm there for her, but it's not – we don't have a relationship to where if something happened to me, she'd be the first person I called...so –

Her father's role in the military was as a chef at different levels.

...He worked as a barracks cook...so essentially a cafeteria kind-of – or on-base so he just cooked in the back, he did culinary arts through the Army and they would send him places like for awards and stuff like that – as a chef...and that's kind-of the scope of things.

Her family did not move as often as some of the other families.

Thankfully we only moved three times and I was part of – we lived in Maryland for about six months – I lived in Maryland, but that was me as a child. I don't remember much of that...but – and then we lived in Germany for most of my life actually, so ten years in Germany and then about five years here before he passed away, so thankfully, we didn't move around a lot – as a child, but...Germany was pretty awesome...people there are very different from people here in the U.S., so great culture shock for me when I came here...trying to think...I do think that people are more open there...so a lot of things I didn't really understand – more so I didn't get the concept of race until I got here...and I didn't get the concept of weight until I got here, so weight and race are a

big thing in the U.S. – I didn't really understand those schemes of things until I got here. My parents did make it a point to explain to me, you need to know your history, but not that – not the whole scope of you will be judged in this world kind-of thing. Does that make sense? So, yeah, so when I got here, it was like oh wow! Being black is a big issue! It's a big thing! So yeah –

She talked about living in Oklahoma before and after her father passed away.

...Before my father passed, Oklahoma- we always wanted to get out of Oklahoma. When we chose this state, it was kinda like we took -- to choose and we had like four states left to choose to deploy to or – so we chose Oklahoma cause we were like, huh, why not? Then we came here and we're like oh! (laughter) And so we lived in the dust bowl of Oklahoma, so yeah – we're like, yeah – this is awesome! Yeah, but Oklahoma – it's very weird – it's ...yeah, I don't know – when my dad was here, we always complained about being here, always talked about moving...never meant to stay here that long, actually...we always wanted to deploy, so he was trying to get a promotion actually throughout his years here, but he didn't pass the test a couple of times, so it was a little frustrating for him and then afterwards, my mom is here, but she hates it just as much, but she feels like she – she got her Masters here and stuff like that, so she's trying to figure out how to get out of here, but I think age is kind-of limiting her options as well, so –. I think he chose it – this was the first state I've ever lived in and so I think it was just kinda like it seemed like a good place for the kids, for us as a whole, it seems like we can do good here...with options that we were given, so yeah –.

The one thing that stands out for Taylor about being in a military family is mental health. “A big thing for me is mental health – yeah, my dad passed away from suicide and so I feel like that's a prominent thing in the military --.”

At this point, I expressed my sympathies. Taylor wanted to continue.

Yeah, yeah, it's fine- thank you, though, but I just feel like it's overlooked a lot. I saw a flyer on my campus not too long ago about a walk for veterans – I'm really sad that I missed it – yeah, kinda understanding the – that's a big deal here...not just here in Oklahoma, but in the military in general that...being in the military can be very stressful and some people don't know how to combat those stresses, so I think that...it's kinda one of the first things that comes to mind is mental illnesses that people have and how they're taking a lot lightly – they're taken lightly here...so that's kinda frustrating.

Taylor was 15 years old when her father died by suicide. She continued to talk about her father's suicide.

...Yeah...the day that he passed, he was pretty frustrated...I think more so because it was hard to get a promotion, so that's what I remember a lot from that...and kind-of his demeanor...I never really saw much of an issue with his demeanor, however, my mom witnessed it more...so that was kind-of – a shock for me after he passed away, to hear about the fact that he actually had – he was diagnosed with depression and PTSD and all these things and I wasn't aware of that and so kind-of hearing about that and knowing that these kinds of issues were going on and you don't notice that from someone... when you're talking to them and kinda think you don't know someone – about someone – was kind-of interesting to me. Does that make sense?

I asked her to explain what she meant from her point of view.

Yeah, definitely! Definitely – I felt like I should have noticed more – I was also pretty...I think after he passed, I was pretty mad...for the simple fact that...I was raised that suicide is – is the worst way to go away because it's just a selfish act...so it was weird for me to have that happen in my family and being raised off of, these kinds of – what's the word – these kinds of ideals, I guess, so to speak – being raised off of – these sort-of mind-sets, like you're telling me not to do this, this that and the other and then you do it – and it's like, - but you just told me not to! So it was really interesting – I think for me that and I kinda felt betrayed...so yeah – The military sent me and my mother to counseling...my older sister – I have three sisters – my older sister was not sent only because she – she was like 21 and I think they were like, it's kinda up to you – so she didn't live at home, so they didn't feel like it – I guess that it wasn't that detrimental for her to have it...but they sent us to counseling, they made me go to counseling for a year for the simple fact that I found my father and then they made my mom go to counseling for six months.

### **Challenges and Benefits of being a Military Daughter**

There were three primary research questions asked of the participants about their experience as the Black daughter in a military family: 1) What *challenges* did you experience growing up in a military family?; 2) What *benefits* did you experience growing up in a military family?; and, 3) Do you believe that being Black affected the

challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)? The participants' answers to these questions are discussed in this section.

I also asked each participant two additional questions of importance to social workers who work with military families: 1) What advice would you give to social workers who work with military families? and 2) What advice would you have for the military to help families address the challenges you have mentioned? These two questions will be answered in the Discussions section.

### **Description of Narrative Themes**

Sandelowski (2010) stated that a research outcome should be “a straight descriptive summary of the informational contents of data organized in a way that best fits the data” (pp. 338-339). I also chose to continue to let each participant speak for herself. Therefore, the data in this study was presented with my summaries and supporting statements from the participants.

Most of the women in this study individually described events in the same or similar language when discussing challenges and benefits and the effects of being a Black military daughter. Because the participants used these similar terms in describing their experiences, I choose to present their experiences as themes.

### **Moving and Traveling**

Moving and traveling could be the same event but, depending on what circumstances the participant was describing, it would be called “moving,” which had a negative connotation or “traveling,” which was described by the participant with positive words and phrases. All of the participants except Jane relocated as part of their military experience. Jane got to travel with her mother to conferences and ceremonies but Jane's

family remained in the same area throughout her mother's Army career because her mother was in the Army Reserves.

Joan, the 73 year old whose father was in the Army for 25 years shares this about moving and traveling: She shared her feelings on moving. She said that she started to realize that it became harder to move on because she hated leaving her friends. She said, "We had friends, people that we really cared for and that as soon as you thought that you were settled in, it'd be time for you to move on somewhere else and how we hated leaving our friends." Sometimes they would remain friends for a period of time but then "it was just like they would come off our world when you would always have to make a new group of friends." She learned how to lose friends, then make new ones: "different schools, different surroundings –whew." It was harder when she became a teenager. Joan said when she was younger, she learned to "just go along with the flow." When she became a teenager, she had her own mind about what she wanted to do and who she wanted as friends. She wanted more say-so in how her life would be, but that did not change things for her.

I didn't appreciate it because – like I was used to it. Maybe I just didn't appreciate it like I should have then, but now I can sit back and see because you know what? Even in today's world, you can't – you don't know a lot of people that are able to go to Europe and just live there and...go to school and not have any worries or – or gymnastics and stuff like that – I was really into all that type of stuff.

Not living where I live – where I came from. I came from right here in Augusta, Georgia. None of those things – had I stayed here – none of those things would have ever been available to me.

She has lost contact with friends that she made in Germany.

Oh, I made some good friends in Germany and...but none of them are friends – well, I don't know how to say this really, because I didn't communicate with any of them in my older life. After we left Germany I

had just one that I really communicated with after we left. And I kind-of lost contact with her and I really hated that.

Marshall, the 64 year old whose father was in the Navy and Army for approximately 28 years shared how moving and traveling had impacted her life:

Ok...we have not assimilated – I don't believe in that. I don't – what does that mean? I can go in any social environment individually and as a couple and comfortably walk around, introduce ourselves to people, start a conversation, be – can at least intelligently listen to a variety of different topics...without the constant moving, without the early moving when I was younger, without the exposure to different ethnicities, cultures, religions...my worldview would have been a lot narrower and with a narrower worldview, your potential – to me, by definition, is limited. So because of all that exposure and because of our ability to move in those circles...many benefits have come. If not just personal growth and personal insight, then exposure to other people of possibilities. There's some White people out there that didn't even know it was possible for them to have a conversation – an enjoyable intellectual conversation with Black people. There are White people out there that didn't even know that they could sit down to dinner and actually leave and think about a couple and smile and think oh man, that was – They were a lot of fun because they had never had fun with Black people. I mean, there are a lot of people that have never had those experiences...and...and still, we weren't the clown at the table. And yet there was no assimilation – I mean, I am not – there is no such thing as well, there is no color in my life. We're just people – no, no. You don't assimilate. Again, I mean, I'm one of those believing in there's beef, corn, tomatoes, basil...mushrooms in the stew. We're not grinding it up in a blender and making it all one.

– you can grind it up in a Vitamix and then you've got sludge – that's what you have. No. I don't want a smoothie. I want the corn, I want the mushrooms, I want the –...that's the benefit. The benefit is I've had a life full of a goulash stew and I know I don't like okra in it and I know I like the corn and I like the tomatoes and I like all this other stuff and in general, I like stew and I may have to pick out the okra.

And – and, hey, okra's not for me. That don't mean that it should not be grown, some people love it. You wanna eat some veggies that taste like and have the texture of somebody's running nose, you go do that! But I don't say it shouldn't be in anybody's stuff, but I don't want it. But that doesn't mean it doesn't have value to somebody. And that's where the benefit of this kind of life goes. You understand that you don't like it. That doesn't mean it is bad. And a wider worldview...to me makes you brighter.

– because you learn what you didn’t know. You were exposed to stuff of who knew? – now you know. By definition, you’re smarter than you were yesterday. The more you’re exposed to, the more you’re exposed to, the more experience you have...the more you have to draw from – that can’t be a bad thing, that’s gotta be a benefit. Even the stuff that you think, ok, I saw that, I never wanna be that, I never wanna do that, I never wanna experience that – that is also a benefit cause now you know what you don’t wanna be. Now you know what you don’t wanna do.

Gina, the 61 year old whose father was in the Army for more than 30 years described her experiences in moving in this manner:

One of the biggest challenges for me when I was little was every time we moved somewhere, you had to be introduced in these classes and I used to dread it...but that’s just me personally. I just used to dread that part of it, but the military – as far as the military life...there’s nothing I really dreaded about the military life. The only thing I would say is no roots. There are no roots anywhere.

Gina said that she learned to have an introduction ready. It still bothered her but she was ready.

Yeah, but the third time I was ready. I’m ready now. Because I know they just want me to say something quickly and sit down and stuff, so I would just say, ‘yes, I’m from Virginia and my father’s in the military and we have been traveling around the world,’ basically that’s what I would say.

Notice that she used the word “traveling” to describe what her family had been doing. Gina further talked about it this way:

Well the benefits of it all is you become a tight-knit family...because you depend on each other for everything and you also are kinda close to the people that are around you as well. You get to learn people from all walks of life...and most people do the same thing you do even though you’re not the same color...so that was a great experience The traveling – just going from place to place I loved seeing different parts of the world...learning their cultures or the way they do things and tasting different types of food and stuff Like when we were in Japan, we had chocolate covered ants –



just experience that whole thing. Going down to Black Market, just things I will always cherish and remember...

Her family became close knit because of the moving, again moving and traveling together are challenges and benefits.

Well, we counted on each other for everything We were moved to a different place, we didn't know anyone else and so we all had to get to know the place, so from whatever experiences I'm having when I go out the door, I brought those into the family, and they vice versa – we all did that so we could learn the place faster and quicker, better. One of the main things my father used to say was if you go somewhere, you better know how to get back home and by him telling me that, I always looked at my overall surroundings, where I went and I always knew how to get back home, so I really appreciate him saying those words My mom's little phrase was you made your bed, now you lie in it, so whatever you do you better realize there's a consequence to it and you're gonna have to deal with it, so that was her little saying.

Well, the military is a unit. And so there was, things like we would go bowling, it would be all military. We would go to the supermarket, to PX, to...to school activities and most of them were military people and so military people already know that we're here temporarily, so why not get along? There's no reason not to get along. We're not even gonna see these people probably...after this or sometime we think we'll see them up the road in another state, because that's how fast it rotated. A person could be here today, gone tomorrow, if they get stationed somewhere else.

I asked Gina if she could tell me a specifying benefit she felt that she got from travel. Again, her response includes “moving” and “traveling.”

All the exposure to different cultures. All exposures to different ways of life, all exposure to just seeing something different. Things are not the same – you need to get away and see other things. I can live where I live now, most people never left here so their ways are right here in this little small city – instead, if they would just – so that exposure – just to get out and see different things. I kid you not, when I stopped traveling, it took me 16 years to not wanna go somewhere every two years. My understanding now is that the military doesn't go as much as it used to like we were coming up. I guarantee, every two years or so, we were moving, we were going somewhere different, so I had – I had it embedded in me to go somewhere every two years, like when it was two years I was where we

going now? Almost time to go and he'll say, yeah, and then we'll go somewhere else and so when I got married...we didn't go anywhere, we stayed in the same place! And every two years, there was this every two year itch that says it's time to go! We gotta go somewhere! And I literally felt – and so being in there, you trained and conditioned and you don't even know it – that this is happening and so it took up to 16 years before I didn't care about moving to go somewhere.

I asked what happened after 16 years.

After 16 years I remembered not having that feeling. It's like it left, the feeling left and didn't come back. The good of the military is the exposure to so many different walks of life. So many different people. I met so many different...kids, from just being in the school system with them and stuff and not only were they...officers' children, cause we were enlisted, so they were – we were all mixed together. We were all placed in the same schools and walked the same streets, did everything together and it wasn't, so much of I'm better than you or you're better than me or whatever – the kids – we had a – we just mingled together. So I thought that was great...to travel of course is – it's somewhat difficult when you're young, but if I had it to do now? Now that you get older – when you are older, it would just be the best thing ever! So...the traveling, of course, is great and...I would – I would – like I said, I would tell people to go into the military right now – like now one of my grandkids is talking about going into ROTC, so that's gonna give her a kinda look at what the military life is all about, so it looks like somebody in the family is gonna go military here...and also...the closeness that your family can become, and that I think in the military because you learn to count on each other as a benefit. So as of today, our family, I feel, is really close even though we're all in different states.

Jada, the 52 year old whose father was in the Army for around 26 years, also discusses moving and traveling. Part of her challenge of being the “only Black kid or probably the only Black girl” in her classes will be further discussed under “education.”

Probably being the only black kid or probably the only black girl in a lot of my classes...and then...when we would get into arguments with people or we didn't get along with people, we knew it wasn't gonna be long that we were gonna move, so if we got into conflict with people for too long, we didn't wait cause we knew we were leaving.”

Yes! So traveling – so I learned to speak German, so I spoke really good German in the third and fourth grade because you got to do it in school...my mom wanted me to take – my mom wanted me to take it

when I came to junior high, but at my school you would only do one extracurricular activity, so I did band instead of taking German – I just didn't have it in my schedule to continue on and I wish I had've continued on now – I wish I had continued with learning more German, but I went to France, I spoke a little French, not much...and so we always went places, and so I always enjoyed spending time with my family going on these different trips.

For Tracie, the 45 year old whose father was in the Air Force for 30 years old it is

a similar story

Sure – once you got connected – like the next thing you knew, it was time for you to move, so it was the move every, like – every two years, was the least amount of time and I think four years was about the most time that we had spent at any one place, so by the time that you got in and you got connected and you were feeling good and you were like, yeah! The next thing you know dad's saying, 'we got some order,' and you're like really? Can you just leave me behind? But that was one of the challenges, so again, that's how you learn how to get in and adapt... one of the other challenges, I think, is sometimes when you're a child and you're not included in those decisions on when to move...kinda where to move and those types of things, you kinda feel like your life was dictated to and so I didn't feel like I had a lot of choice...when it was time to go. I knew that orders could come down any time frame and that my dad was gonna be sent where he was needed, but I used to hear stories about other kids who their parents would ask them, where would you like to go? Or what kind of time frame would you like to leave and for us, it was like if the orders came down and said we needed to be gone October 2<sup>nd</sup>, then we were gone October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Whereas, I wish my parents would have probably said, 'tell you what, we will delay – or I'll go ahead and you all delay for a couple of months until there's a break in the school session,' so it wouldn't be in the middle of a school year – leaving October 2<sup>nd</sup> and then trying to hurry up and get enrolled a couple of weeks later.

I asked Tracie if there was a specific occasion that she remembered.

Oh, no, all the time! All the time! And so that was all of the bases that we ever went to – whenever the word came down, it was literally ok, here it is, this is what we're gonna do. Now the only difference was is when...my dad had received orders to go to Japan. And I wanna say this was about like 81, 82 maybe and my mom didn't wanna go to Japan for whatever reason and so they wound up re-categorizing his tour to an unaccompanied tour and so that time frame, my mom and I stayed in Texas with my grandma, but the only reason why we didn't go is because my mom didn't wanna go, but outside of that, every base that we ever went to, it was

whatever date they said we needed to be out – that’s when we were out and we went and we moved to the next facility.

She said that she “just learned to deal” with moving.

You just learned to deal with it – you learned to go with the flow...you realize that you don’t have really much choice in the matter, so you dig deep, I learned to become a little bit more extroverted, I learned to ask a lot more questions, especially when I got to a new place...to figure out, ok, what’s the culture like, what’s the lay of the land? What types of activities are available to students? Kind-of what’s the area like? That’s kinda really how I adapted, so I became a lot more extroverted and a lot more of my own advocate, I guess I would say. The other thing was...periodically, I would journal a little bit just to kinda get my feelings out, but outside of that, just kinda pretty much just dealt with the punches, if you will.

Tracie spoke of traveling with her family as a “happy lifestyle.” Her family was often separated from the rest of her extended family when she was younger, but she remembered being happy growing up during this time.

Karen, the 40 year old whose father was in the Air Force 28-30 years, had similar experiences. These are her experiences:

I think while it’s great to go somewhere new all the time, adjusting and learning to assimilate to a new place may sometimes take longer in certain areas more than others...I think being in the military family – I don’t know if it’s a challenge, but it depends on how you look at it, but you’re exposed to a lot more, whether that’s travel – we talked a lot about politics and international relations in my family due to where we lived, so when you come back or you move to certain places and kids your age don’t have the same exposure, have not travelled as much, sometimes have never even been on an airplane, you’re trying to find common areas to relate can be difficult so you don’t look as if you’re better than anyone, but you’re just – you have different experiences and I think that can be hard to articulate when you are younger versus when you’re older and explaining that.

..... other than the moving around and everything. No cause I think my parents did a really good job of trying to normalize life for us, so we were involved in sports, we had activities...so only – and we had a close family knit. The bond with the four of us, so...I think the – the real challenges were when it was time – right when it was time to move and right when it

was time to leave. Like when you were leaving a place and when you were arriving in a place until you got into your battle rhythm.

The ability to see the world and different cultures, before – all before basically see the whole world before I was a teenager – that was a huge benefit. The ability to learn how to adjust and assimilate in any situation, feeling confident in yourself to walk into a situation and know that, that you can handle it and if somebody talks to you, that's great and if somebody doesn't talk to you, you'll be ok, too...so just kinda the self-confidence it gives you about handling situations. In addition, seeing something...having the opportunity to be around and observe people who, have chosen a life of service whether that's flying airplanes or, the various jobs in the military, but you get to see and meet people from all over and it opens your abitur to what's out there in the world and the type of people in America and from all – from everywhere else.

Veronica, the 37 year old whose stepfather is a Marine and who had a post-active duty family, also moved. What stands out in her mind about growing up in a military family was the family's frequent moving to new places.

Yeah! It was just – moving – like it was nothing and now because of it, it's nothing to me – it was nothing to move. I mean, so we moved...three times in the fourth grade...half eighth grade year we were in one place the middle of eighth grade year and then we were in another place eighth grade year and then we were one full first year in ninth grade and then we were in another place for the last three years of high school, so I would say moving probably influenced our lives because it was nothing to move for our parents.

Monica, the 32 year old whose father was in the Air Force for 30 years, gives us these memories:

A challenge I experienced the most probably was emotional in the sense of when you are moving every two to three years, it's hard sometimes to make connections with people, so you become very guarded against becoming close to people because you know that if, say for example, I'm going to this particular school, I'm getting close to this particular person, well guess what's gonna happen – in two to three years' time, it's going to end and it may end in the fact that you move on...before that family does or the family moves on before you do because maybe they arrived at different times than you did and so as a result of that, emotionally, it can cause a bit – a feeling of – how can I put it? I guess a feeling of isolation

on some levels because, again, you want to have close relationships, but you're afraid of establishing them because you're afraid of the loss factor and then also, too, there comes the grief part, that starts to come into play regarding that because again, it is...a loss when you have to move away from your friends. Also, too, I have to remember there were time frames where we have moves within moves is what I called it –for example, going back to England, there was a time frame where we first got there and we lived at a place known as Seven Longfields – that wasn't on the base, that was near the base and then a few months later, I remember we moved out to another place...called Enstone and then a few months later after that we left Enstone and wound up moving onto the base where he was stationed at and that was Upper Heyford, and so, again, there was emotional challenges there because you can get attached to your neighbors, to the house you're living in, to the area and you have to give that all up because of maybe dad's trying to get closer to the base or, whatever the case may be regarding having to move. So, for me, the biggest challenge was probably emotional and also to the emotional aspect in...not knowing – because at that time frame there was some different wars, things going on in the 90s, so really not knowing if dad was going to be deployed and if he got deployed, how long was he gonna be gone? Was he going to be in the heat of action, things like that...so the biggest challenge would be...really for me, was emotional.

Well, of course, besides again being able to travel and visit different landmarks, like for example, during the time frame that we lived in England, [we] had a chance to see...the Cadbury Chocolate Factory, visit Buckingham Palace, other things like that...the other benefits I experienced was being able to understand the art of making friends...again, there are all sorts of people from all walks of life who are in the military and who have children in the military who they grow up with these traditions and cultures and so on and so being able to...interact with these children and see how – and see life, I should say, from their perspective was really helpful and really nice.

What is important to know is that there are many challenges, there are many benefits...as it regards military families, but probably the most important thing to know is that sometimes these challenges and these benefits while on the one hand, for example, I use traveling – go back to that again. On the one hand while traveling, can be a benefit...to a military child, on the other hand it can also be a detriment because, again, you sometimes don't feel as if you are ever gaining any stability...because you're always moving, you're always knowing that in three years' time it's going to end. Or even like I said, you may experience a move within a move where you're living off-base for a little while and then all of a sudden, a house becomes available on the base or dad gets a job change all of a sudden. You now have to move onto the base, so, it can be a bit of a

blessing because of what you are exposed to and the fact that you can advance educationally, you can advance when it comes to, your cultural know-how to deal with things, things like that. It can be a blessing there, but like I said, it can also be a bit of a curse because, again, the stability factor and also the emotional side of it can begin to weigh in heavily upon you.

Chandler, the 24 year old whose father was in the Air Force for 32 years, had similar memories to those women older than her:

The biggest challenge – it got easier as I got a little bit older, but the biggest challenge was when I would find out that we were moving – I know what's coming about a year in or it certainly could have been two years and I'd know that the conversation was coming that it would be time to move...but it was just rough every time, like kinda thinking – cause I would adapt quickly and even though I'd only been in a place for a year or maybe two, I would feel very kinda committed to the place or I would feel very attached to – not the place, but like the people that I had met there and the friends that I had made, so it got easier as I got older, but when I was younger, like third, fourth, fifth grade, it would be very sad when I realized that I was moving, but then as social media came around, it got easier and easier to stay in touch with people...it got better, but, yeah, it was hard when I would find out we'd be moving, but at a certain point, I just realized, I didn't wanna move the last time and then we did and I had a good time, so I feel like that's gonna happen this time, too. So I kind-of got to a place of understanding that it's what you make of it.

The biggest benefit, I kinda just keep coming back to, is my adaptability...change really does not scare me the way it does a lot of people because I know, again, still you can really take control of the situation even if something unexpected is thrown your way and make it into something great, so I think that my – I think the best thing I got out of it was adaptability.

She saw living in different places both a benefit and a challenge.

Definitely both...Because when you first move to a new place even if you've done it many times, it kind-of has that...little bit of an intimidating factor cause you don't really know what you're walking into exactly because it's brand new and you have that, kind-of wondering of are people gonna like me. How do I fit in with them? All of that stuff, but then it kind-of forces you to grow and you realize that you kinda have to take the responsibility of walking up to people, introducing yourself, kind-of showing them who you are because, you're new, they don't know you, so

it's a mix of being adaptable and also just comfortable in new situations where you have to walk up and introduce yourself.

## **Education/Schools**

Department of Defense (DOD) education was also a challenge and a benefit. Many of the women were very satisfied with their education, which they were sharing as memories as the education of their youth. Some of the younger participants were home schooled because their parents, especially their mothers, were not pleased with the education in the DOD schools in more current settings. Educators, parents, and other students who shared experiences inside and outside the classroom had an impact on the challenges and benefits of Education and Schools.

Joan said that her education as a military child was “the best.” She describes going to “private schools.” Upon further discussion, I found that these were the DOD schools that she attended.

I had benefits for – I think I had some of the best education probably. And...I got to travel the country – our country, foreign countries and...other than – if my father hadn't been in the military, I know I'd never would have done any of that. Because we did – we went to private schools, especially when we were in Europe – we went to private schools and...I think we had some of the best teachers that you could probably have in those days...our schools were on post.

I asked why she thought she had “one of the best educations?”

We were more advanced because when we came back to the states, the stuff that they were learning – we had already learned. Therefore, my last half a year in...as a senior in the states was just like – why am I here? I've already had all this stuff (laughter). We were more advanced, I think – I felt like we were. I have a lot of things to look back on – you know what? I've never just really sat down and looked at it like that. But, yeah, I guess I did have a lot of advantages I never would have had.

I probably would have graduated from high school regardless and probably would have gone straight into college cause we were from types



of families that believed in all of your children going to college and just about all the children of my – my relatives of my age have been to college. It was a thing– you were going to college. I guess we were that fortunate, but –you never just think – sit back, you just take it for granted, I guess, when it's given to you. You never have to work hard for it, so I guess it was presented to us, so never sat back and really thought about it like that.

For Marshall, living again in the south presented educational challenges.

Make no mistake, Kentucky is the south. We had to test to – I remember we tested – they didn't accept the grades that we got and – in Kansas, in Salina – they thought no – these grades aren't right, so we had to test for the grade to get in our grade –make sure we were gonna be in the right grade, so we had to take tests and...they really had a problem with the results of the tests. I think we tested better than even our grade showed. Like we all tested up a level, but they would not put us in a level higher. Yeah, so...that kind of thing. It was 'no, they can't be this smart,' and then we tested and we were – we all could have skipped a grade.

Marshall said that "everybody didn't get tested."

We as black children got tested. I'm not sure all the black children got tested, but my mom – again, was not – no drama – she's not the one that was engaged in schooling. She didn't help you with your homework or anything, but when something like that happened, she could be very stubborn in old southern woman ways where – no, no, they need to be in this school, they need to be in this grade –that kinda thing.

Marshall was placed in the higher grade during her time in Belgium.

I asked Marshall to explain what school was like in Belgium.

That was really, really good – that's probably the first long range 'mistake' I might have made in my life, if I look back and wanted to do something over again – even though everything worked out fine, so it wasn't a mistake, I don't think so – but anyway...yeah, went to Mons – we had a French-speaking side of our school and an English-speaking side and if you wanted to delay graduating a year to learn the language, you could go to the French-speaking side and then you'd be fluent in French. I was already a year ahead, I graduated when I was – 16 or 17? I graduated when I was 16 or 17 – anyway, I was born in '53, I graduated in '71. 17. So I could have gone another year is the whole thing. But who wants to spend five years in high school, right? So I didn't do it, but looking back, I should have done it – that would have been a lifelong great thing to do. And then I probably would have gone to college in Europe.

Rather than coming back and going to college at Purdue – if I hadn't made that choice...but it was great – loved it. I had 32 in my graduating class and that was the English and the French-speaking side. So – so we were basically one class, the English-speaking side – I mean, there were – there were around 18 – we were all in the same class. There was one class of seniors...so it was great. It was – again – '71, so half of us were still in Bobby Brooks skirts and sweaters from old school – military, the perfect little military children to the old guard ones that were wearing French leather and we were like 'whoa!'

Gina talked about education during her discussion of the challenge of moving.

She gives further details to her feelings about her classroom experiences.

Well, being the new person coming into a classroom is a challenge in itself and then to have to stand up there and say, class, this is Gina, she's new to the class, welcome Gina. I don't know – it just bugged me – it just didn't make me feel good – I was very uncomfortable with that whole situation – I was somewhat shy, so then to have to do that every time and then you go and sit down and you hope that everything will work out ok – and it did! Everything worked out fine. It's just that one little awkward – that one occasion, every time I knew I had to go through and I never did get used to it really.

She said that it was harder when she was younger.

Well, younger – being younger, when I was young, like going to the third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade – those areas right there were the hardest...after that it wasn't so much you get introduced in the class, so – and so it sort-of stopped.

Yeah...like about the fifth, sixth grade, somewhere around there...I – they wanted you to tell where did you come from and why are you here, stuff like that – so you had to get up there and say where I'm from, I'm from – I'm not from anywhere! (laughter) It was difficult – that's a difficult thing cause everybody's saying, 'where you from?' and I'm like I really don't know! (laughter) I just go from city to city. (laughter) so...later on in life, I said Virginia because we always tried to get back to Virginia.in between everything, but it took me a while to learn that – to say that in the beginning because I really didn't know where I was coming from and...I'd been – at one point I was saying I came from Georgia, I come from Virginia, I come from California, I'm coming from – (laughter) And later I got it together, so that's why I think that's why it was really awkward for me because it just seemed so crazy that you don't know where you come from and...and everybody else in there, they knew exactly where they were from and they had their aunts and uncles –

everybody was right there. Those were the places where we were off-base. They were off, so you had – we had to be bused off-base to go to school. Now on-base schools – no problem! You know, those were like everybody came from everywhere. They were just as confused as I was. (laughter)

For Jada, being the only Black girl in her classroom presented concerns.

Because, let's just say there was only one black boy in the class and so I remember an incident where we were gonna be on this program and be on a trampoline and so it just seems like – I was always paired up with him and I didn't really like – like him, as a male. He was an ok guy, don't get me wrong – but...I like all guys – color, race wasn't a matter really to me, but it just seems like other people were making us pair up and be together. ...It kinda was my first instance that let me know that race existed. ...because before then, being in a military family, everybody was equal – it didn't seem like you had to be one way or the other...but...other adults or my teachers – they were putting us together and I didn't understand why – why did we have to be together when I really liked David over here – and Peter. I would have rather been with them.(laughter)

Jada wondered if being smarter than her classmates was a challenge.

...I don't know if it was a challenge, but I knew – I knew I was – I don't wanna say smarter...I think – the education being in a military school was really good and when I came to Oklahoma, I feel like I was kinda ahead of the other kids there than...than my classmates for a while. That's kinda how I felt when I went to school there, yeah – when it came to academic piece, I didn't really hang out with them as much on that side – I mean, I still did well in school...but as far as doing homework or on an academic piece, I didn't really do anything with them, but what I did more with them was relating in sports and softball and track, which was a lot of fun. A lot of fun, yeah!

Monica describes her experiences in DOD schools:

The other aspect of it was the school aspect. When we were stationed overseas in England, the educational system of the DOD was, – was pretty advanced and so there was a lot of things that I learned in let's say kindergarten, first grade and second grade that I probably would not have learned until maybe third and fourth grade had I been here stateside. My mom and I figured that one out...upon returning here to the U.S. and, of course, getting me enrolled in school and she would talk to my dad about the curriculum and all that different type of stuff...so that was a big benefit. The other nice benefit, too, is that I did get to experience a different culture – not only by living over there and by seeing things with my own eyes, but I also had the chance to attend two different British schools and see what school was like for English pupils and so being able

to do schoolwork with fellow English children who were my age and seeing how they learn, too, and seeing how they did their homework and things like that was also very beneficial...for my educational upbringing, just because it allowed me to see things a different way, see things in a different light and it allowed me to advance...like I said, in elementary school fairly quickly.

She remembered some differences between her schools.

Two different ones...the first would be cursive writing. So when we came back here to the U.S. and...my mom was looking at enrolling me in a private school – because after we left England, like I said, we went to New Mexico – she looked at enrolling me in private school where before I took the test to see what grade I would test into, she was having a meeting with the teacher, the teacher was talking about, yeah, in third grade we're gonna cover cursive writing and they said the other – what was funny, I already knew how to write in cursive. I learned that in second grade because, again, we had an advanced system. This other thing...that really, I think, took it over the edge was in the Math Department and...what happened is that during the time frame that I attended one of the British schools out of the two that I had gone to...we had a very different way of learning math and so one day for a math lesson...we were taken out to the pond that was located on the school property and so our math project was to figure out how many buckets of water it would take to bring the pond up to water level and so, what was really nice about that math project is that we had had a hands-on experience in dealing with numbers and mathematics and measuring, but we also had a hands-on experience dealing with conservation and nature and, we also had...a little bit of a – you could say a science experience as well...so by the time frame I came back here to the U.S. and they were talking about, ok, I'm gonna introduce you to multiplication, this and that and so forth, again, some of the stuff – I was already able to do because I had already done it in a grade that was – well, how can I put this without sounding silly, but I had already done it in like second grade...I had already learned how to multiply some...I had already learned how to, you know, do addition with larger numbers and things like that, so...those are the two that I can really think of the most is cursive writing and also...being able to do math that would have been reserved for an upper level grade.

Chandler

I remember what ages I was, but I lived in Colorado. Colorado Springs, Colorado when I was – trying to think of what grade I was in at the time. I believe that was middle school – that was when I would have been in about sixth grade. Colorado Springs, Colorado and my mom actually pulled me out of middle school because there was a just a lot of – just like

inappropriate things happened in middle school, like kids' behavior was getting kinda out of control and my mom didn't really want me to be around that, so...I went to sixth grade and then she pulled me out for seventh and eighth grade and I was homeschooled....so I spent a lot of time being homeschooled...those two years, so I had friends from around the base, but I didn't have a lot of social interaction with the school. I had a couple of best friends who lived on base with us that I would hang out with, but other than that, I was at home.

Another part of the education/school experience was the question of intellectual capacity and capabilities for these Black daughters.

Marshall talks about her intellectual challenges in this manner:

Other than being accepted as a person of intellect which some people just could not accept that you were bright...and that could be frustrating – especially when that label is put on you and used by other people that you fundamentally in your core think are less intelligent. That's a challenge.

I asked Marshall for a specific example to show how she felt.

You know what? I'm kind-of arrogant in my intellect, I think, ok? So there are very few day-to-day people that I find that are brighter, quicker, on the up-take, quicker to understand the...and when people are not as quick and can't understand – from teachers to – that's why I started being a flight attendant cause my authority figures were not bright people and when you have people that aren't as bright as you try to be condescending because they don't understand and so they're gonna be condescending – I don't tolerate that very well, and I will say, 'no, you don't understand.' And they're going like – you need – that's fine, but I'm just telling you, you're wasting time and you're wasting money and there's a problem.

Monica's mother chose to homeschool her. I asked her why her mother chose homeschooling.

Well, she said I wasn't being challenged enough in the school – so what happened was I started out attending DOD [Department of Defense] schools and...and she didn't really – there were a couple of DOD schools she liked, but then there was a couple she wasn't really too happy with and so she decided...she was going to put me then into a Christian school – a prep Christian school, but then she wasn't happy with what was going on there and, again, she always, I guess, instilled that I was – I don't know, I

guess, smarter than average, smarter than normal – something, so she just felt like I wasn't being challenged enough and with the schools that I went to for some reason did not really meet her standards. And so she was like, well, I'm just going to homeschool you myself, so she went through and found a curriculum, Christian-based, of course...and whatever the curriculum – it was a pretty good...system, I can't lie about that because there's a lot that I learned that when I got to college, I realized I was ahead of many of my collegiate-level peers and...the education sector anyway and...so I am grateful for that experience, but coming back to everything...she just did not like again, I guess, the old way they were teaching me – she just felt like they weren't challenging me enough, so she felt she could do a better job of it and that's pretty much what she did.

I asked Monica where she was living when her mother began to homeschool her.

Ok, so we had just returned from the United Kingdom, so we were living in New Mexico at that time and...that's where...Holloman Air Force Base, so that's where she began the homeschooling venture and...she even continued homeschooling me after dad had separated from the military and retired and subsequently after they separated she continued to homeschool me through graduation, but it started out was in New Mexico – Holloman Air Force Base.

### **Daily Life Inside/Outside the Fortress**

Living on a military base versus living “on the economy” in an overseas location or off base within the United States had its own challenges and benefits. Although the events could be the results of moving or travel, the participants shared experiences that help give a picture of their daily lives. Even if they resided outside the Fortress, the military influenced their daily lives.

Joan said that living in Germany “was a whole ‘nother world!”

Because – in school you had, had...history and stuff like that, so there had been a war and – and we went right into this place where it hadn't been that long but the war was there [World War II], but we were treated like kings and queens over there. We had maids and stuff that we didn't have when we were...we couldn't afford, let's put it that way, when we lived in the states. Like we had a maid come in and do our stuff – make our beds, clean up the house, so – that was pretty nice! (laughter) I guess we weren't living like we were little rich kids! (laughter) Because the economy was totally different then. Like one of our dollars was worth so much more

than theirs, ok? And so the money – money-wise, we just had – we lived better. That was at that particular time. Now, I know it's not that way, but back then, it was really nice.

The family lived on post in Germany and they were “sheltered.”

We went to private schools [Department of Defense schools] and...we played – Kim and I played softball and we were all-American, all-German, you should say – we won the title and...we just basically grew up teenagers. We weren't allowed off-post. We lived – everything we needed to do was right there on post, even down to our grocery stores and stuff, we call those the commissary and the commissaries were where you bought your staple goods and, your groceries, and then we had the PX [Post Exchange], where you could go to buy like other stuff that you needed, and other than that, we never left the post.

Marshall's experience:

I...was even on the periphery that there were two Black girls in my graduating class – her dad was a Colonel and mine was an E7...and in the military in those days – the first differential is officer-enlisted. That's even before color, so if you are an officer that was one group of kids and amongst that, you were a Black officer's kid, but then I was an enlisted kid first and then a Black person in an enlisted ranks second – you see what I'm saying?

So even though there were two Black girls in the graduating class, we weren't close because her dad was an officer so she was in a different – social economic environment than I was. You lived at different parts of the base, your moms were not friends, they weren't gonna be friends, at I mean? It was just – so we weren't close. We are much closer now – I mean, we're friends now, closer than we were when we were in high school.

Karen said that she attended a DOD in Germany and local schools in the States.

She said that it was in Virginia and Maryland that they tried not to “appear to be better than them.”

...It's just an overall kinda when you moved to a new place and they're like tell us about yourself or when you're talking about where are you going to travel? Where have you been? And you're like, oh, well that time I was in Italy and they're like oh...thinking like oh, you think you're better than us or – no, just relaying an experience I had, so just those sort-of things. I can't think of a specific instance. I would just approach it, this

is something we experienced or it's because my dad's in the military we did that, but...I would say that my parents taught us to be confident and...in our experience and not to be ashamed about that – those experiences that we had or where we came from or kinda the lifestyle that we had in the military and so we had no problem saying that and when somebody came at us in a different way or didn't like it, then we'd just walk away or you kinda figure out a way to resolve the situation and move on.

Monica wished that she had more contact with other children.

Explore there – for example, I do wish I could have got involved, with the local homeschoolers association that was in our area but we didn't have one and so they would try to – well, not try to, they actually did – they would have different things that would mirror what was going on in let's say middle school, high school, things like that, so they had sports league, they had different things going on where you could do a homeschooling co-op where, say for example, you and I are homeschool parents and one week maybe I host the homeschooling grade and then maybe you host the homeschooling grade, so that way you had some form of social interaction...I do wish she had gotten involved in that and they invited her on a couple of different occasions because the way the homeschool system worked is your name would go on a roster or a list so if there were other parents in the area who were part of the same program, then it would give your information and then they would – they could – establish something with you...but beyond that, again, my book No. 2 was being academic...and I also remember having to be, given that I had to provide a lot of emotional support because my parents' marriage...through a lot of years of it – they really did begin to separate and go in their own direction, you could actually see that, so I do remember feeling as though I had to be a bit of a support system...for my mother or for my father...but really to my mother mainly...just because whatever I was seeing as a child...and I'm trying to think what else do I remember because it would have been reflective, creative...emotional, academic...that's really pretty much what I remember the most of myself.

When her father was out of town, her mother “had to keep the home fires burning.” Her mother could not even depend on someone else to mow the lawn. She also “had to play mom and dad in the timeframes that maybe we needed a mom to comfort us at the same time, a dad to maybe kind-of-discipline us, or show us the ropes on different



things.” “She also was responsible again for making sure that meals got on the table that the house was clean, that we went to school on time, and so on.”

I think the strength of a military wife is what really sticks with me, because when he was away and out of town she had a very important role in supporting the family and making sure that we stayed on track as he made sure that his military family so to speak, his troops, stayed on track.

Daily life for Chandler was different.

It wound up – because we moved so much, we’d move every one to two years...made me very outgoing as a child, so I definitely was the kid that could walk up to just about anybody and start a conversation and also, I had to attend a lot of military events and functions that my parents would have to host...when we would move to a new base, so I was very comfortable talking to adults from a really young age, so I felt like I matured very quickly as a result of the military lifestyle and how frequently I had to move around...so I was very outgoing...always smart, but I would always sometimes at school I would be – I would switch schools and things would be a little bit off academically, so like they would have been studying one part of a unit in social studies at one school and then I’d move to a new school and they’d be in like a totally different part of the curriculum – like that type of stuff, but I would catch on pretty quickly and I never had trouble making friends or anything like that, so I think the lifestyle overall made me very outgoing and kind-of matured me quickly.

## **Being Black**

The participants shared a variety of experiences of how being Black impacted their lives as military daughters. While these experiences could be seen as a challenging or beneficial experience, participants easily thought of memories to show how this influenced their upbringing. In some cases, the memories are carried into experiences of today. Being Black in the military led to challenges with Black and other ethnicities.

Most of the children

Joan saw it this way:

We didn’t live like we saw our other relatives and other people live. We had advantages and we didn’t know the different then, ok? But we still –

we lived a lot better than a whole lot of other people lived. Being for real – you know we did – even if we were poor. Because we had so many different advantages.

We had a chance – as long as we – until you came out into the civilian world, that's when you got lost. Because it was a whole different life from being in the military to civilian life. Civilian life was totally different than military life. Well, when I first came out – must have been about 22, 21 – 22 more or less- it was a whole different world. I wasn't sheltered anymore. I was right out there in the middle of what everything that was going on and...it was a whole different ballgame! It really was. And sometimes it was hard making that transition from military life over to...civilian life. And the ways that I had been brought up because that's when it really became...I really found out I was Black, what I'm saying? And the different things I had to go through – like I guess I had been brought up, I spoke proper then, I was really proper and my mannerism was totally different and everybody seemed to think I acted like I was better than they were or however the case may be because of the fact that I had these advantages. Other Black people that I met – you never ran up against that?

...I had left my girlfriend – she's my girlfriend now today – I love her to death, we love each other and I still keep in contact with her, she keeps in contact with me...when she told me that I just had this attitude that – this is when we first met, ok? But I have this attitude that I thought I was better than everybody else because I seemed like I was used to things that they had to fight for – it was just given to me. I'm not talking about material stuff. It was just the way that I carried myself. It was totally different. I didn't really know how to intermingle with Black people, on a whole, let's put it that way – I'm serious about that. They were totally different than anything I had ever known. Does that sound crazy to you?

Anyway...it was kinda like a struggle and I felt like – I had love for a lot of my – what they used to call airs or proper or whatever, I think I lost a lot of that. I became lax and I became...normal every day Black person. (laughter) I had to learn how to do that. (laughter) It changes you! Really changes you – changes you a lot. So there it is!

Marshall:

“Oh stop! That cannot be one of the questions! Absolutely – as much as any other aspect of who I am has affected it – absolutely!” For Marshall, living in Kentucky gave her a contrast of being Black and the children around her.

Kentucky is the south – absolutely...but it's funny because this would have been around 68, 69 – 1968, 1969, 70 – so 68 – we stayed every place four years, so it would have been like – I'm just thinking of the years – Daddy was in Vietnam when I was 13, so that would have been 68, no 66. 66 and 67, so after that we went to Kentucky, so we were in Kentucky around 1968...so...that was starting a little bit of a change of little bit of...hippy stuff, a little bit of, loosening of the 50's kind of a thing...and – like my English teacher had an acceptance – I talked exactly like this when I was a kid, and so you get all these Black people talking about she's trying to talk White – I was raised – the only difference is we weren't allowed to use contractions when I was growing up. My mother would – we had to say is not – we couldn't say isn't. God forbid ain't ever came out of our mouths. But we couldn't say can't – we had to say cannot. My mother was – my mother was on it with the English, man. I think because Blacks were taught a lazier language and I don't think my mother – and because she was very smart didn't think that was gonna serve, so – in the long run, so when we were in Kentucky, my English/speech teacher, I remember very clearly her always using me to show them the difference between the nuances in words and she – I remember very clearly she had me do it for probably – it was a long time because kids had a hard time hearing the difference between – and in the south and the way they taught – the difference between cat, caught – like caught something, and cot – and she would say, “say it again” – I would say cat, caught, cot. She would say again – cat, caught, cot and she would say, ‘look at her mouth, look at her lips, look how when she caught – she makes kind-of an open O and when she says cot, she makes a grimace, ‘and she would use me for that. The Black kid, to teach White kids how to say something properly. I thought even at the time that was funny.

It wasn't even acknowledged except she – I was her tool, like the little sound thing you have on the computer – see how it's said? I was that person for her and nobody ever questioned it – I just thought it was hilarious that it was me and I was always called Marsh, so in those days little girls didn't have boys' names and they didn't – little Black girls didn't definitely, but even in those days, Marsh? Tthis, this, this. Marsh, say this, Marsh, say this, Marsh say these two words. Marsh, say this – you hear the difference? You hear the difference? And it had nothing to do with my grades or anything else, I mean. And they had a hard time giving you above a C.

If you were Black. Hard time giving you above a C if you were Black – really hard time...and...they would –I remember this particular teacher – her name was Mrs. “Smith” and I don't remember teachers that well, and it wasn't because I was her favorite or anything, I mean, she was a very southern woman...and no smiles, no nothing. But...she did give me A's and B's and...I actually got – we actually got a lot of A's and B's, but

there were ones that would not give you an A or B and you just knew it and...you couldn't talk to your folks about it because my mom didn't like C's, but you couldn't talk to – my mom also believed that teachers were fair. She just fundamentally believed that. She didn't believe they had personalities, she didn't believe that they had favorites, she didn't believe any of that stuff, so you didn't even have to come to her with that, you just had to say I'd try harder...and I know –we all know that's not true...

Gina remembered:

I think by being African-American military family, I mean, you definitely benefit because you're not –racism is zero. You don't have that prejudice, you're not supposed to have that prejudice against one another. I mean, you – basically we are all there the same trying to be among each other, help each other out, you – you are like a family, so –and this is a kid's perspective.

And...so I think that helped a lot because I didn't – it didn't matter that I was black. I didn't see color. So when I came out in the real world, as we say, most of my friends were white, but I didn't see them as white and a lot of the...the people I was around –they noticed – but I didn't see them so much by color. I didn't see anybody by color and if it wasn't for the fact that people just kept saying stuff. I probably would never have seen color. And then because of people saying stuff, – you know that of course we know there's racism. I mean, we know this – it's harder for us and – but I do feel like if you – by being in the military, it helped ease that – that...that hatred. It eased the fact that when people act the way they do, it kinda eased it for us to understand it a little better and to kinda like – taught us how to deal with it, deal with things. You don't have to accept things because – but we learned how to deal with them a lot easier and faster.

Tracie did not think being Black mattered.

“I don't – I think it's just the military lifestyle! (laughter) I could be wrong – I don't think it has anything to do with race or ethnicity – I think it's just the military in general.”

Karen has personal experience being in the military. Here's how she remembered it then and now:

No, I mean, as a kid in the military, no because I think my parents sheltered us, but I think, I'm sure...my parents faced different adversaries or different – had challenges being high-ranking individuals or in the military and being African-American.

I asked if she could think of a specific instance.

I would just say that, I think, a lot of times...and I use this being in the military myself – outside of uniform, nobody can identify who you are. In my uniform, they know what rank I am and probably what I do based on that or where I'm working, but once you put on civilian clothes, you're usually viewed as a regular member of society and I think, sometimes...people don't have the full knowledge or even think – and I would want – that would be something to have someone like General "Smith" or something during that time – there weren't that many Black generals around so, there wasn't the commonest – it wasn't the assumption that when you're talking to someone and they say they're in the military that this would be a senior officer in your military, so I'm sure that impact influenced how people treated them, or...I would say in my case now in the military, people assume that usually you're the spouse versus actually the commander or when they walk in, they're like we wanna talk to the boss, they'll look towards somebody else, so –

Veronica described living in Montana:

...Yeah. I mean, being a Black in Montana, alone – being a Black in a small town in Montana and your mom has a high job title? There was a whole bunch of challenges! Again, that comes to you have to hold yourself – we chose because of our family expectations, to hold ourselves at a higher standard and then everybody is looking at you – like basketball, for example – the expectation, I remember, is I'm gonna be great at basketball. Was I good at basketball, yes, but it shouldn't have been just because I'm Black or anything. My sister was fast in track. It wasn't just because she was Black. Those are the genes that were given to her, but when everybody is looking at you, when everybody knows who your name is, you can't in trouble that easy, either, but...yeah, it makes a difference. When people are racist towards you and that's something you've never experienced before...but with that being said, my husband's White...and my family's bi – my whole family's bi-racial. My sister is married to someone who is White. My brother's partner is White. My mom dated someone, so we don't...in the military, you're around so many different cultures and beliefs and I think that's a great thing if you're around the right people. Being in Montana as an African-American...we met some wonderful people, but it had its challenges because you still felt like a sore thumb there...

Jane grew up in the same location because her mother was in the Army Reserves:

I think it benefited us as opposed to challenged [us] because growing up Black you already notified, hey, you were gonna have some hardships and I have experiences from a very early age from as soon as my parents made enough money to put a down payment on a house, I would never forget that house or then the nice part of town and as soon as we got there, I will

never forget – we walked out of the car and that “n” word was hollered out so quick and I looked at my mom and she just smiled and she said, ‘that’s not what you are,’ but I knew it was a bad name and then it was the whole thing when you moved into the community and the whites flight took place, but I knew at an early age and I was notified and I wanna say from the day I could walk that hey, you are gonna have challenges, but it was when I was taught of whatever challenges you have, that’s not you! So when this came about, I knew with the little bit that I had, was to lean on the family. So that’s what I did.

Monica gained strength from stories that her parents shared with her:

It probably did and the reason why I say that is because...in being African-American, we’ve always had to be a strong people because of our ancestry, because of what’s happened and what’s taken place and so when I think about the emotional aspect of what happened and what I dealt with – while it could be devastating on some days because, the tears would come and there’d be questions of why, and just a lot of not understanding all the time what was going on. At the same time, being told about the strength of my ancestors...really – I think really put me in a different category than let’s say, some of the girls who were around my same age – who maybe they came from a different ethnic or racial background...and when I say that, what I mean is that I feel like maybe I was a bit stronger, being able to handle a lot of what I was dealing with versus what I sometimes saw in my counterparts, who maybe were not African-American. Yeah, we went through the same struggles, yeah, we went through the same challenge, the same fears, the worries, so on and so forth, but I felt like maybe being African-American and being aware of my heritage and my history and what my ancestors had been through allowed me to also...allowed me to develop an inner strength – you can get through this, you can do this...yeah, you’re gonna miss your dad, yeah, it may be hard only seeing your mom all the time, yeah, you may be going through this emotional pain because of having to move around, but again, you have the strength and resilience within you to actually understand why this is going on, understanding why this has to be done and then dig deep within and begin to find your own – your own stability, with regards to being able to handle and cope with things and the other fact of it is, too, is that being African-American, we were also very strongly religious in our household, so, that was another, I guess you could say beacon of strength – being able to turn to the church or people within the church who we knew...for additional emotional support or additional... gains, just trying to take your mind off of any fears that I may have had regarding deployment for my father, for example. So, yeah, I do feel that being African-American did give a – I guess you could say an extra added boost...to being able to handle the challenges of being a

military daughter. Because, again, I was able to remember the strength and resilience of my ancestors and channel some of that.

I asked where she got the knowledge of the strength and resilience of her ancestors.

So those would have been stories that were told to me either by my father or by my mom and so they would often sit down and would tell us about our family history and who they were and where they came from and they would also tell us about some of the things that they even faced growing up. I mean, for example, my dad was an excellent provider when he was in the military and still is an excellent provider, by the way, but my dad before going into the military – he grew up in poverty and so he would tell us stories of sometimes going to school and worrying about not having the best and most fancy clothes or not having the most fancy food to eat and yet, he told us that he understood that he had a goal and he had a mission and that was to complete school that he could do something with his life, so that he could make it good in his life as he would sometimes say and so hearing that story would then remind me during those time frames when, let's say, he was away for 30 days that, you know what? Yeah, it's hard that dad is away and he is not here, but I have to remember, too, that daddy is fighting for our country so that at the end of the day we can achieve our goals, such as going off to college and getting degrees in a land that is free, not in a land that is ruled by a dictator who tells you what you can and can't do, and so for this reason, while the sacrifice hurts, it is necessary. So, again, knowing that he had an end goal when he was getting out of his poverty-stricken childhood, it helped me to remember that there's an end goal here, too, for your dad being away for so long. On my mom's side of the family, she would tell us stories of how that sometimes...our ancestors on her side would witness really grievous tragedies. For example, there's a story she told of a – I think her mom told it to her. I don't remember if it was a great uncle or someone in the family who witnessed it, but anyways what happened is that they were working as slaves – one day, this particular family member, and they happened to overhear a – hear a white child ask his white father to shoot a ... a slave who was running in the field one day – just so he could see what the insides look like and so that story is something that has been passed down throughout the generations and so, again, just being reminded of...stay reminded again of what it is we had to endure as African-Americans and, we endured so much inhumanity and we're still able to keep our humanity, but also me, too, regarding having a great emotional balance and, being able to...regulate my emotions in such a way that I wasn't so overtaken with one emotion that I couldn't no longer function –things like that...that story is what really helped me out as well – as far as regulating emotions and so on, but coming back on track, with everything, it was my mother

and my father who told us about our history, told us about ourselves, really, when we stop and think about it and...those stories is what gave us strength – to be able to emotionally regulate what we were dealing with because, again, you didn't want to go too far into land or too far into...crying all the time, which could then mess up your ability to function everyday life and then also to being able to remember everything at the end of all of it – it may hurt now, there is a positive goal at the end of everything.

Chandler shared her experiences as a Black military daughter:

Yes, absolutely, and I think that race definitely impacts all experiences you'll have in life...as a person of color, and I think that it impacted it in the sense that – going back to what I said before where I was...that we were just one of the very few minorities around. There just were really weren't a lot of minorities that we interacted with...on a regular basis and when I would go to school it was rare to see other ethnic students there, it was mostly white students – there were a few other ethnic students – they wouldn't be in my grade or definitely not in my class...so that was something that my parents had to put extra work into kind-of teaching me because there wasn't just automatic diversity all around...and that's something that I probably would not have been aware of if I was Caucasian cause then everybody would have looked like me.

Taylor shared experiences from a young perspective:

I feel like yes because it affects every part of my life, so I don't know if – I think a big thing is that a lot of people feel like I'm in a minority populated field...for me, like I went to a public school who was kind-of low income, so you have them try to recruit all these people who they know needs this education, they know need some money, so kind-of for me, like we could afford the money and for the insurance and such like that, so kinda having that stigma tied to you, I think, as an African-American, is kind-of interesting.

...Because it's like – not just a stereotype, but a true fact, like, that this is what it's used for, but having that understanding that it's only used for African-Americans, it's not – but still that's one of the main reasons why it's populated with minorities in that way.



## **Being a Military Daughter**

Pride in being a military daughter comes through in many of these stories. The experience of being in the military is shared throughout the stories. I felt that this was important enough to share as a separate theme.

Joan and Marshall said that their families would not have been able to go to the places they were assigned, the children would not have received the education that they received, and they would not have grown up in a desegregated environment if their fathers had not been in the Army.

Gina shared what being in a military family meant to her:

and I remember – Jada and I – Jada saw a rabbit one day and she climbed a fence and – that fence was tall and she...coming back across, her thigh went into the fence and I remember my...my mom and some of the other people – kinda had to climb up and push her up and bring her over while we were out there and all the people in the units came running to see what they could do to help her out and everything, so everybody was really close and that's what I really loved about the military is because of the solidarity of the whole thing – how you felt like you were family, everybody kinda helping each other out... like where I would go to the real world. And that's one of the things I loved most about the military is the solidarity of it all – the union. Of everybody – even though we all came from different walks of life...it seemed like we all came from the same place, we all knew each other, we were all just a great big family and basically everybody really got along and I didn't have anything to compare that to until I was no longer in the military life and that's when I realized the real world, as they call it. So I would tell anybody if they have the opportunity to go into the military and have a family – it's a great place for them to do so – not only, not just the solidarity, but, just going different places and seeing different things and just having a broader view of the world – it would be – so I would tell them even though I know now wars are coming upon us and stuff like that, it's a little scary to do that – it's not like it used to be back in the day, but if it was, I would definitely say, yes, go and experience that life cause at one point, I was – I think even Jada, maybe, too, and my older sister, we thought about going into the military, but for different reasons, we didn't.

Gina remembered “being safe.” She explains it this way:

Well, we never feared about somebody breaking in your home or...or people messing with you...and if they did, we knew that there were channels or stuff we could go through to get it stopped. So that's not the case – in the real world. So the safeness, the solidarity, the...the uniformity, I guess, if that's a word – I loved all of that.

These are her memories of growing up in a military family:

Oh, wow – that's a good question! I think there's a couple things – I think the first is that you had to be adaptable – I'm an introvert by nature, but I'm a learned extrovert and so what I mean by that is typically, I'm kinda shy, I like to kinda be behind the scenes, but in order to be successful you can't – especially being a military brat, you can't be that person that sort-of shy because you will get left behind in the dust. People don't necessarily come up to you and kinda include you – you kinda have to – I don't wanna say force your way, but make your own way...so you have to learn to be adaptable and learn to kinda advocate for yourself and you have to depend on yourself. I think the other thing that it taught me is that there is – for all of the folks that I saw that were in the military – it was a huge sense of pride for them to be able to serve their country...I actually at one point had thought that I was gonna go into the military myself, but wound up not doing that. I do regret that decision now, but...two things – one was you had to learn how to be adaptable and flexible, but the other thing is that you learned that there was a sense of pride that was instilled – not just with serving in the military, but also...being part of a military family.

She explained how she got skills from her father.

Because...he was structured – very structured and everything should be a certain way and just looking at him, how he ran his life and what he did – we kinda picked up on some of his qualities. Well, when he walked into the room...immediately, we were at attention. So the military background on my father – it was really in the house, so if – he explained to us that, that what we do in life, not only reflects us, but it reflects the whole entire family, so when he mentioned all this stuff to us, it made us feel like, ok, we have to try to represent my father and the best ability that we could do. So that's – that's what we mainly gathered out of that.

What stands out for Karen about growing up in a military family is a different meaning of family.

Wow...I think if you've never been in the military or ever grown up in the military, I think it's a definitely a learning curve for folks, but I think once you get in and you've had an opportunity to be a part of the

community and the culture, I think you walk away with a better sense of understanding. I think one of the challenges is especially not only for the children, but also for the non-military member is the need to be adaptable and the need to understand that not everybody is just gonna be able to springboard back into kinda who they are – I know that's kind-of a clumsy sentence, but what I mean is, you know, you have to – not everybody has...the ability to just be happy-go-lucky and kinda jump in and do what they need to do, so for those folks that are shy or for those folks that don't like change – being mindful of that and having some resources in place – whether its counseling services or maybe it's like the family... unit – I think they used to call it a family resource center that they would try to have when folks were new to the area to kinda introduce them, but typically that would happen for like maybe that first couple weeks and then after that, it was kinda like, ok – we gave you some resources, now you're on your own...but the other thing that is a benefit, you get to see different places – not only stateside, but also abroad that to me allows you to learn so much about yourself as an individual and that you really realize the world is not this little small microcosm of your world. It is really this huge space with lots of people, lots of culture, lots of things to learn and I think for me it created a better sense of understanding and being inquisitive about the world.

Monica thought that the meaning of family expanded while her father was in the military.

Just a sense that...family is not just who you have by blood, but kind-of those that become your community around you, so we have a lot of very close family friends who while not directly related, I have many additional moms or aunts or uncles who watched you grow up and took part in the raising of you because they created – they were part of that community wherever we lived.

To a lot of different cultures, but I think in addition to the cultural aspect and understanding how to really work with different people and get along with different people from different backgrounds and races and ethnicities, religions, etc. I think also the strength in military wives was what really impacted me.

What stands out to Chandler about growing up in a military family is being adaptable.

Yeah, I'd say the biggest thing that like stays with me and will probably be in my nature is that I'm very, very deeply adaptable...for example, I went to college in D.C. I went to American University and then I joined a

teaching program, an alternative certification program that operated either in D.C. – they had a branch that operated in D.C. and a branch that operated in Baltimore and I really wanted to be accepted into the program and they asked me at my final interview would you prefer to be in D.C. or Baltimore and I did not – I genuinely didn't have a preference. I'd been in D.C. for four years at that point and I was perfectly willing to pack up and move to Baltimore, and I credit that to honestly the military life of, I understand that you can make – like the experience will be what you make of it, so if you move to any place it can be great or it can be terrible based on your attitude, so I had no problem saying, sure I'll move to Baltimore, no problem, then they chose me and they said I was going to Baltimore and here I am three years later still happy, so I think that's the biggest like impact that being from a military family has had on me as I am very – I do like to make plans and I'm very regimented and I get that from my father, but I'm also very adaptable, so I'm a very interesting mix of loving a plan, but not being married to it.

Karen and Jane joined the military. They said that their experience growing up in military families led them to enlist. Monica said that she and both of her sisters thought about enlisting but did not enlist. Veronica thought several times about enlisting in the military but decided that because she had two minor daughters this was not the time to enlist.

### **Summary of Themes**

Being a daughter in the military gave these woman the adventure of traveling to different countries and different states, a feeling of being safe, brought one daughter out of her introverted self, provided opportunities to adapt to many situations, led to a sense of extended family with everyone around them who was in the military, and led several to consider the military for their career.

The themes show the many sides of being part of the military culture. A relocation can mean moving that included leaving behind friends and the challenges of introductions in a new classroom, sometimes in the middle of a school year and also

traveling to new states and cultures that these daughters might not otherwise have discovered.

The DOD education provided an excellent education in the memories of the older participants while the younger participants said that their mothers did not think the DOD schools provided the environment in which they wanted to send their daughters to school. Southern schools provided challenges for both the older and younger participants. Teachers were more challenging and critical of the older students while the students provided the challenge to the younger students. Most of the participants said that they were perceived differently by their school colleagues, many of whom had not lived outside of the immediate area. The exception was Jane whose mother was in the Army Reserves. Jane always lived in the same area.

Daily living inside and outside the Fortress provided the occasions for these daughters to realize how important the mother's role was within the military culture. No matter where the military service person was assigned, the mother had to maintain the household, keep things ready for the service person, and put out any fires that arose. The family was not to be a distraction for the service person. Karen, Veronica, and Jane said that the military still treats family as a hindrance for the service person, even though this is not the official military stance.

Being Black was evident for all the participants. Though most felt the challenges that go with being a Black person, all of them felt that they had managed to get past these challenges and thrive. The Discussion Chapter will talk about this further.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

This chapter presents a discussion of the challenges and benefits of being a Black daughter in a military family as presented in themes, revisits the questions asked about Black women in the military culture and the MMRI and other theories, examines the recommendations made by the participants for social workers who work with military families, reviews the recommendations made by the participants for the military to consider, explores limitations of this study, looks at opportunities for future research, and offers a conclusion. This study focused on the challenges and benefits for Black daughters of military families by asking the following research questions: 1) What *challenges* did you experience growing up in a military family? 2) What *benefits* did you experience growing up in a military family? and, 3) Do you believe that being Black affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)? Table 3 provides a summary of the themes that answer these questions as identified by participants.

*Table 3:* Summary of Themes to answer the Research Questions

**Moving/Traveling**

**Education/Schools**

**Living inside/outside the Fortress**

**Being Black**

**Being a Military Daughter**

## **Discussion of Themes**

The lives of the participants show the intersection of Black culture and military culture. Daily the culture learned at home influenced their lives. Daily, as a military daughter, military culture influenced their lives. Moving presented challenges while traveling presented benefits. Moving evokes memories of leaving behind family and friends; changing schools, often within the school year; and the negative perceptions associated with change. These memories also recalled fear of having to introduce yourself as the new kid in school where everyone else knows one another, where the kids might think you are showing off or are uppity because you have lived in foreign countries, might speak a foreign language, or at least have lived outside of the town that many of your classmates have never left. Karen spoke of “adjusting” when moving. This adjusting was to a new school, new children, and new rules.

Jane, the only participant whose mother was in the Army Reserves, had different challenges different than the other participants. Her mother was deployed only once. Jane felt the loss of a woman with whom to share things as she was a maturing teenager. She had family living close by, but she said that it was not the same as talking with her mother. Her mother was a nurse, which she considered an additional advantage to her at the time (her teen years) that she missed. She did not experience the moving of Active Duty families so this separation stood out to her.

Traveling is a predominant benefit for the participants. Traveling included the opportunity to learn about other cultures, countries, and people far removed from the local neighborhoods in which most of the participants were born. Included in the traveling was the ability to learn a foreign language. Several participants mentioned that

they wish they had continued studying the language in order to retain it. Marshall regretted not attending school one more year so that she could have graduated proficient in French. The participants made friends in many of the countries and states of their travels. Older participants could write letters or make telephone calls. Making telephone calls was limited because of long distance costs at that time. Most families would not allow the telephone calls, so these participants often left those friends behind and did not keep in touch. Not keeping in touch was a regret of several women. Younger participants spoke of the advantages of social media in keeping in touch with their friends.

Being the “only Black kid” in a classroom was a challenge. Although only Jada used this term, several of the participants mentioned that being the only Black family in a new country at the time they were stationed in that country. Most of the participants, except Jane who did not live outside the area in which she was born, felt the DOD school system provided an education that surpassed what their stateside counterparts were able to receive. For some of the participants their DOD schooling would have occurred during the time that the schools in the United States were still segregated.

Monica and Chandler were homeschooled for parts of their education. Both said that their mother became dissatisfied with DOD schools and took over their education at home. For Monica, homeschooling began in fourth grade and continued until she graduated high school. Chandler was homeschooled in Junior High school. The participants (except Joan) felt that they were on track or even ahead of their classmates when they started college. Joan attended college after all her children were grown.

Living inside or outside the Fortress, being Black, and being a military daughter intersected all the time. The participants were adaptable, flexible, and able to adjust to



each situation presented to them. They were able to work within each situation as presented.

Gina talked about being in the Black Market in Japan as a member of a Black family and experiencing “no prejudice, no racism....treated us just like everybody else.” In many cases, the participants did not fully realize a racial difference until it was pointed out to them by adults. Jada, “the only Black girl” was deliberately placed with the only Black boy for all activities in her school for which the children had to pair up. This pairing was regardless of Jada’s feeling that she would much rather be placed with other boys in her class because she had a friendship with them. Joan and Marshall used the “n-word” to describe something said to them after moving. It seems these participants are able to say that the challenge does not belong to them. Rather the challenge is for the people who cannot accept them and who felt that name-calling was an acceptable form to voice that rejection.

Two participants had an experience unique to them in this study. Veronica’s stepfather came into her life after his Active Duty military service. She believed that her perspective and her challenges are the aftermath of her stepfather’s diagnosis of having PTSD. His emotional outbursts and failure to show affection remain with her. Veronica said that her mother’s strictness, which she attributes to her mother being the child of a military family, became a benefit for Veronica. Taylor is the youngest participant in this study. Her father died by suicide. The older participants mentioned some problems within the family, but the problems did not lead to suicide, which is increasing in the military (Franklin, 2013). Taylor also said that her family had financial problems. Older participants discussed the military as providing their families with financial security, or at

least bettering their families' lives from what they would have been if the family had not been in the military. The military career allowed the family to live well, even having someone to clean the house and do the laundry for Joan's family in Germany. In some situations in which the participants' families were living in the South, the post provided everything the families needed so that they did not leave the military base. This included a commissary (grocery store), PX (Post Exchange) or Base Exchange (BX), gym recreational facilities, and schools. These facilities were present on every post or base and were especially helpful when their families were living in the southern United States.

The participants saw their parents as having high expectations of them as a benefit. Their parents instilled the desire to reach high and achieve more than the participants might have thought was possible. This, along with learning a good work ethic, learning respect for people, developing reliability, and learning the art of making friends might have impacted the women in their careers. The participants have or had (if now retired) what can be described as successful careers: accountant, bank loan officer and military officer's wife, human service specialist, higher education administration officials, Air Force Officer, clinic manager, Army Officer, self-employed media web consultant, teacher, and youth guidance specialist. Chandler and Taylor are still developing their careers. Chandler indicated that she will continue to work in urban education. Taylor said that she intended to pursue a Masters of Social Work degree. Learning to take responsibility to introduce yourself and not being afraid of change might also have added to the ability of these women to become successful.

## **Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) and other Theories**

The MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998) represents a combination of existing theories on group identity that includes historical and cultural experience that make racial identity “a unique form of group identity for African Americans” (1998, p. 23). Sellers et al. (1998) presented four assumptions of the MMRI: that identities are situationally influenced and that identities are stable properties of the person, that individuals have several hierarchically ordered and different identities, that an individual’s self-perception of racial identity is the most valid part of their self-identity, and that an individual’s emphasis on racial identity or the significance of an individual’s racial identity is likely to change during their life according to their social context.

I examined these assumptions within this study. The participants’ identities were influenced by their situations. Several participants stated that while living outside the United States they were not aware that they were Black. While living within the States they were aware of the color of their skin because they were made aware by teachers who refused to acknowledge their intelligence. One of these southern teachers thought Black children were not capable of earning higher than a “C” grade, the school was not willing to accept their higher grades from a previous school, they were restricted from going off post or base; they were teased by other Black children because they spoke differently, could speak foreign languages, performed better in school, or because they had travelled outside the local area of these children.

The participants did have several hierarchically ordered identities. The first identity was that of a military daughter. Several participants stated that they were instructed never to embarrass their parent who was in the military or to only behave in a

way that was expected of them in this role. Hierarchy in these situations did not explicitly include race as the primary factor, although it was always present. Being a military daughter held the highest priority. Rank was the hierarchical priority within the military.

The participants did not mention that being a female was important as a child. For the participants in this study their self-perception of racial identity while they were children growing up in a military family was not more important than their overt behavior. Sellers et al. (1998) and Stryker and Serpe (1982) said that overt behavior can be constrained by situational factors. In this study, the situation of being in a military or being the stepdaughter of someone who had been in the military were constraints and situational factors.

The final assumption is true for this study, which is that military culture constrained their situation. The self-described racial identity of the participants changed over their lives according to their individual social context. Going into the “real” world was a turning point. Leaving the safety, security, and protection of living within the “Fortress” and entering the civilian world, either when they entered college, got their first job, or moved to another city as a new mother brought the reality of what it meant to be a Black woman in the United States. This reality seemed to be different for the participants depending on when they entered the civilian world. Perhaps their experiences mirror what was occurring at the time they faced the “real” world. During the 60’s there were protests and marches demanding Civil Rights for Blacks. During the 70’s and 80’s there was silence about racial Civil Rights but more vocal concerns about Civil Rights for women. In the late 20th century, and currently, there are protests and concerns about Civil Rights for all. All includes, Blacks, women, LGBTQ+, and anyone who considers

themselves oppressed, unappreciated, and taken for granted. The older participants said that they were quiet as children and did not feel they had a right to protest anything. Today they are very vocal about what they think should change. The participants who fall in the middle age range within this group did not seem to feel as strongly about their struggles as Black women. The younger participants have chosen to work with groups that can be considered marginalized: urban school children and children in a youth center, The self-described racial identity of the participants as a young Black girl of eight years old is not the same as a young Black lady at 18 years of age or as a Black woman of 73, 64, 61, 52, 45, 40, 37(2), 32, 24, or 21 years old. These are the ages of the participants.

There are four dimensions of racial identity in the MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998): racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group, and the ideology associated with the identity. Racial salience is “the extent to which one’s race is a relevant part of one’s self-concept at a particular moment or in a particular situation” (1998, p.24). For the participants in this study centrality of the identity rings true. As stated previously, many of the participants were not aware of their racial identity until someone, usually outside the family, brought up the issue of their race. This could be name-calling, members of their race calling them “uppity” or claiming they (the participants) were better than the local Black children, a trip back to the parents’ family to remind them of how Blacks were treated in the South, or other similar situations. Jane has an exception. Her mother was in the Army Reserves and her family lived in Alabama throughout her childhood. She was very aware that she was Black and she recognized the advantages that her mother being in the military brought to her family.

The centrality of identity was not relatively stable across situations for these participants. Their racial identity varied depending on their situation. Many times they were not aware of a racial identity for the reasons previously stated. Racial regard is a “person’s affective and evaluative judgment of her or his race in terms of positive-negative valence” (Sellers, 1998, p. 26). The participants seemed to always have a positive racial regard. Even when there was name-calling, disputes with teachers, or childhood peers questioning their identity as a Black person, the participants seemed to be able to know who they were: they were Black daughters in military families. Sometimes they needed to be able to maintain this identity in spite of difficult circumstances.

### **Black Women**

The last dimension of racial identity, ideology, was explored earlier as part of the foundation of Black women’s culture. The four ideological philosophies presented by Sellers et al. (1998) are nationalist philosophy, an oppressed minority philosophy, a humanist philosophy, and an assimilation philosophy. A nationalist philosophy “stresses the uniqueness of being Black” (p.27). This means that Blacks should be in control of their identity with little input from other groups. The participants identified as military brats they did not necessarily identify as Black when they were children. Returning to Wertsch’s idea of the military as a fortress, for most of the participants the Fortress was colorblind. It was outside the Fortress that others tried to be in control of their identity. Thus, the Collins (2009) and Lorde (1984) lens is supported. The participants gave themselves their own identification at that time. They did not see themselves as oppressed, but they did recognize benefits they had that other groups such as civilian

Black children did not have. The participants recognized their better education, living circumstances, and exposure to outside cultures, people, and languages. Jane recognized the difference between her local community and the exposure she had to new cultures and new people when she traveled with her Army Reserve mother. The participants were able to try to bond with or establish links with non-military Black children. They could become allies with others who suffered oppression.

In the humanist philosophy, individuals do not see race, gender, class, or other differences (Sellers et al., 1998). The participants seemed not to see race or gender. They saw class as the military hierarchy, i.e., they were very aware whether their parents were enlisted or officer service personnel. This was the hierarchy that they lived with daily. They knew the difference between themselves and cultures that they lived with outside and inside the United States. Outside the States they accepted and explored the differences. Within the States, it seemed harder to accept differences that they experienced while living in southern states, i.e., the administration, teachers and peers in school. When the participants were younger, they saw the need to remain within the confines of the posts and bases as the military met all their needs. When they got older they realized there was a different reason they could not venture off post or base, because the south had not kept up with the desegregation of the military forces. The participants saw all people as human but living in different circumstances.

Assimilationists look for similarities between Black people and the rest of society (Sellers et al., 1998). Individuals with this perspective do not deny racism, or the importance of being Black. They advocate for social change but work within the system to change it. Individuals with this philosophy also think it is important to socialize with

White people (Sellers et al., 1998). The participants fit this philosophy. As adults, they accept their race with pride. When they were children, in many situations race was not an issue. One exception was Marshall who did not want to see “goulash” but wanted to see the vegetables in her stew. She was saying this as an adult. She is also the participant who noticed how she was treated differently from the non-Black children at her schools. Her father took her frequently back to their southern roots for visits so that she noticed and appreciated the difference between how she was living and how her relatives lived in Mississippi and Arkansas. As an adult, Marshall was married to a military officer. That part of her story is not included in this study but her experiences as a Black military spouse definitely influenced her lens looking back on her childhood.

### **Strong Black Woman**

The participants saw their mothers as the woman who was self-sacrificing and had the ability to put the needs of her husband’s career and her family before self. Marshall said that even if her mother was unable to consider the needs of her immediate family, when extended family members needed her, she was always there. Self-sacrificing included the mother who rode from North Carolina to California with morning sickness while she was pregnant because her husband was relocated for a new assignment, the mothers who always kept the home fires burning, kept the house clean, and kept everything organized, the mothers who worked outside the home when they could and did other duties expected of a military wife, the mother who was in the Army Reserves while also being an Army Officer, the wife who had a husband with “a drinking problem,” and the wife who endured infidelities. The military family is male-centered when the male is in the military. The Army Reserve mother seemed to maintain her role



of mother within the family and her husband had a special role when she was gone. The mother in the role of protagonist influenced her daughters to succeed, in spite of, or with the help of, the environment that the mother created.

### **Role Playing and Secrets**

Our roles are the face we present to other people. Roles include how we choose to present ourselves to others and how others choose to see us (Goffman, 1959). This study's participants fit into the roles constructed for them by their environments. This includes the environments in which their parents grew up, which formed their parents' lens for constructing an environment for their daughters. In these situations, the parent's environments were carried inside the Fortress where the all-consuming environment inside the Fortress takes over and forms new roles for everyone inside. The Black daughters in the study reflect the intersection of Black family culture and military culture. Some parents appear to remind themselves and their children of the environment in which they were raised, perhaps in order to be grateful for the all-consuming environment of the Fortress. Within the Fortress people kept secrets. True feelings were restrained. All must put on the face required to be successful within the military. Marital infidelity is not discussed. A "drinking problem" is hidden. While it is possible that in civilian families marital infidelity and alcoholism is kept secret, in the military it could be considered not being ready. Readiness is always expected. It is doubtful that there was truly no discrimination, but it was necessary for parents to live as if there was not because they did not want to lose the life of the military, which was perhaps better than the life they left. Several participants can remember very specifically when they realized that they were Black. Most of the parents were born and lived in southern states until they entered

the military. Surely they never forgot they were Black and what that meant about living in the south. It is possible that it was a role that parents played in order to be able to raise their daughters without the concept of race until their daughters left the Fortress. These parents might have held dark secrets that only they knew from their previous backgrounds. They kept these dark secrets to protect and to shelter their children. The children felt safe and protected. The parents' strategic secrets could be the secrets that they kept from other members inside the Fortress. The southern parents could share these strategic secrets and expose their children to these strategic secrets so that their children learned to survive inside the Fortress. Inside secrets were what everyone inside the Fortress kept to maintain the military identity. This includes the participants learning to function well within their military families. Wertsch (1999) said "...Our parents were always obsessively concerned about how things looked" (p. 1). The participants in this study learned this well.

### **Systems Theory, Mettle, Adaptability, and Transformability**

Systems Theory is relevant to this study. The military is a very structured organization. The participants describe their lives as structured to follow the expectations of military families. The fathers' career was center to life for the participants (Jane being the exception because her mother had the military career). For Veronica, her stepfather's PTSD, and therefore her stepfather, was central to her life as well. Mothers are described as managing the household and making sure the house was neat and clean. One participant described leaving a place and moving to a new place as getting into "battle rhythm." Parents could give a look that let the children know they were serious and everything must now be in order. Words were not necessary. One participant said that her

parents did not use a belt more than other parents in those days. Discipline, in many forms not acceptable today, was used and expected. Children knew to obey the rules within the Fortress or accept the consequences.

I thought the potential participants (before I knew who the participants would be) might have some shame in their memories. Shame is described as “an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging” (Brown, 2006, p. 45). The participants were *not* ashamed. They did not feel trapped, powerless, or isolated. They were not trapped because they knew, for them, life was better inside the Fortress than outside. They did not feel powerless, even feeling that retreating to reading books, writing in a journal or diary, or burying themselves in studies gave them some power in their situation. These were their methods of achieving freedom.

I thought the potential participants (again, before this study) might be resilient. The participants were not resilient, i.e., they did not have to be able to continually change but remain within acceptable thresholds. I perceive that the participants showed “*mettle*.” Mettle is defined as “vigor and strength of spirit or temperament” (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2018). Mettle is also “mean mental or moral strength to resist opposition, danger, or hardship” (2018). The participants seem to have had mettle to stand up to whatever came into their environments. They remained steadfast in living within and outside the Fortress.

Some of the participants described themselves as having adaptability and it appears that all the participants were able to adapt to internal processes and external forces that allowed them to develop in being a member of a military family. Whether

overseas or in the States, whether in the south or in the north, having siblings or being an only child, being in an excellent educational system or being homeschooled, the participants were able to mature and develop over their time in the Fortress. As the participants got older, adaptability became transformability. They were able to change to meet new challenges but I see that differently than the continual change required of resilience as defined by (Folke et al., 2010).

### **Recommendations for Social Workers**

I asked the participants to share recommendations they had for social workers who might work with military families. As expected, their perspectives reflect their individual memories. They were forthcoming about limited knowledge of the military today, but they wanted to share helpful information.

#### **Joan**

The military is totally different today than it was when I was a young woman. So I wouldn't – I mean, I guess they should be understanding, but prepare them for more of what's to come once you've lived – once you leave that military life to go out into the civilian life – it is a different world. Because this is what I found out – I don't know how it is today, but for me when I did it, I wish I could have had somebody there to tell me what to expect because I didn't expect a lot of the stuff that – that I came up upon after I moved – after I wasn't in the military or went to civilian life. It was totally different! And...when we were – I don't know, because somebody in the military – none of my – “Tony”, my oldest son, he was in the Navy and that's it, but I haven't really lived around any military people since I came out into the civilian life on my own.

#### **Marshall**

Understand that they're not a monolithic group. You work with them the way you would anybody else in any other environment as individual family units with their own challenges...there is not a military family. There is not a military family. Any more than there is a White family or a Jewish family or a Black family and you can define that. You cannot define military families especially in this day and age can be anything from single family units, dysfunctional...religious...wiccan...same sex –

military families have...not even necessarily that many unique challenges other than the threat of death which is significant, no doubt about it, but then again...there are many families with...dads that are gone for long periods of time...there's more – as much dysfunction, there's – abuse, neglect – anything – you can find that anywhere. You can find that in any environment, so the uniqueness of the military life to me is that something necessarily a social worker can help with – now that we're out, I find that most of the people that I meet now that will say, 'thank you for your service, but I really think you're kinda stupid for doing that for that kind of money,' is what the dot, dot, dot says.

... That's one thing that has never been addressed because – it's like being Black or like somebody passed gas and nobody wants to mention it – it was brought out to the light – you're gonna have to lance the boil. We're hiding the boil right now, and people don't respect the military. They will throw some – some...and I don't know how long they're gonna continue this throwing some platitude at it because during Vietnam they didn't and then everybody felt such guilt about it that we had the pendulum swing the other way and everybody kissing the ground of the military and now I think that's getting old. And I think the pendulum will start swinging the other way, but no. I think people think military – you are there because you had no place else to go and if you're an officer, you are there because you were too lazy or not bright enough or it was easier because your legacy and your family just rolls on it. But I see very little respect for the military members. I hear all the little, atta boy, atta boy...

I mean, even to the thank you for your service – that irritates the crap out of me. If you say, 'well it's always good to say that!' No! It irritates me. Especially if you have a serving aged child that you would never put in there and you're getting more benefit from – from the American experience than the person in the military, but you're not gonna send your kid, but thank you for your service. I find that condescending, so – so again, each thing – there's nothing that you can put around and say, 'well, this is a good thing,' to me, 'cause I'll hear a thank you for your service, sucker, is what I hear. 'Cause I'm saying don't thank me, just send your kid. So my kid doesn't have to go 18 times. That's literally where I am. You have people going until they get brain damage, not – not – they will go back until they can't go back no more. Now if you were to send some of your little kids – No. 1, they'd get some discipline and No. 2, everybody would only have to go once. But in order to avoid a draft, we're gonna send these kids until they die.

...but you respect – I know all about – and I'm not the only one – my dad did World War II, Korea and Vietnam and my dad will not salute the flag and he won't do it anymore. He doesn't carry it, he doesn't salute it, he doesn't do anything to it because...of what it doesn't mean and he's 89

years old! He's 89 years old! It doesn't mean...equality and justice for all. It doesn't mean that...it's a safe place for everybody. It doesn't mean you have the freedom to worship as you choose. It doesn't mean that because...you don't! If you worship as you choose, you may get beat up! If you worship as you choose, you may get deported! You can serve in the military as a non-citizen and then get ostracized in Walmart!

### **Gina**

As far as the social workers are concerned – they have to deal with people coming back from war and all that – they gotta do – these guys, they go through so much, – from a kid's perspective, we're just here basically to help out any way we can and help our family out any way we can and do whatever it takes to make you feel whole – a social worker would have to try to make a person feel whole. So – so...as far as a social worker – if she's dealing with the kids and stuff like that – it's different, but if she's dealing with the person that's out there, it's a lot different.

Ok, like for instance – my dad, he was open and we went to a social worker and all of us sitting there and we're trying to talk about everything, he wants to get out – what he's feeling and stuff like that – that would have been great, but my dad – he wasn't open like that, but my husband – now I think, I think for a social worker it would be really good to get everybody in [the family] to hear what a person is going through because we don't know. And then if we did know, we could try to be more sensitive to them or just try to watch out for some things that won't upset them, and understand why they act the way they're acting.

### **Jada**

... I do remember when my dad would go away – so when he was away, we were always sad, but when he came back, we were always very happy to see him...so that happened when I was four, it happened when I guess I was seven...and then again when I was in high school, he went away – so that's a time when you're a little sad. I mean, your mom's gotta run the whole ship, so...I guess advice for social workers is for whoever the spouse that's home...make sure they're ok because they're the one running the ship and if they're ok, then the kids are probably gonna be ok.

### **Tracie**

I guess just have a very understanding demeanor, but you'd have to do that in order to work in social work, in my opinion. I think...having resources, I think, is gonna be very helpful for folks just to be able to talk about their fears or their transitions or how they can be better...sort-of acclimated to the area that they're in and I think the other thing is doing studies like you're doing because again that information – that research will help

inform additional policies and/or resources that's coming down the pipeline.

**Karen**

That's a good question...one, having a knowledge of how the military system works is helpful. Also...understanding the nature – the dynamic if it's a dual military family or if it's a single military family...not every base has the same...what's it called – not treatments, but the same programs available to everybody, so understanding what programs are available and what's covered by medical care, but I mean, interacting with a military family and understanding that there's probably different demands or stressors on a military family than there could be on a regular family and by stressors, I mean additional deployments...especially now, depending whether that's – what career they're in, service base...job, but those types of additional stressors on a family exist, I think, a lot more than they used to.

**Jane**

The advice I would give to social workers who work with military families is to first start and explore that culture in itself. ...But every military experience is different and the reason why is because of their MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] and what they serve and each cultural work, infantry, whether it's medical service or combat – will give you a different experience, a different leaning, a different area, so when you talk to someone military, it's like that is totally different from that person and as the helping profession, you really are going to have to do the work to find out what does the military look like for you? What you experience and if you do not start there as a social worker, you will miss the mark. If you generalize and go with, oh, well, and you do what I call the lazy intake of oh, they deploy and I know that they served this time, you miss so much. Where did they deploy to? What did they do? Did they have a family? And did they experience any type of trauma? What did it look like for them? What did they see? I mean, really learn that culture because the military is its own culture in itself. We speak a whole different language. It is very different – just YouTube. The terms military people say – it's hilarious! And then YouTube – if you're growing up military things you heard – it is hilarious, but if you grew up, you're like – this is what I dealt with! But start there – really explore and really learn what they were immersed into – especially if they're someone of diversity because when I came in in 2003 and my platoon sergeant who is from Puerto Rico and he really sat down and talked with me and his experience when he went through – one of the issues I had was why is it that I'm noticing everyone attacking and saying, 'oh, speak English!' Every time he said something in Spanish, I had a real problem with that and it was right there in the

regulation that you can't make comments of that nature, so he took the opportunity to explain to me all of the discrimination and if you're really not aware, you think, oh, well, it's just African-American and that's not the case! At some point, everyone has experienced something in the military and that's why you really have to learn what each person's experience looks like and what they experienced and if you don't as a social worker, you'll miss it.

## **Veronica**

You have to be open-minded...every family situation is different...tough question...open-minded, absolutely. You never know what kind of story you're gonna get – I could tell you all kinds of stories about military spouses, but you don't know what that family story is behind why they're coming to you in the first place...being a military family is tough...the pressure put on the person that is at home is almost as much as the soldier that is in the military because they're responsible for keeping that family going and in the military, that soldier is focused on his job, but he expects that family to be the way it was when he left and that is not the case and so just trying – usually not the case...you have to figure out – if a family comes to you as a social worker, and they're coming to you because they're having issues –whether it's the child having issues or the parents – the marriage is falling apart, you have to figure out what the core reason is. Is the child acting up because they miss their dad? Or are they acting up because they're not getting the support from their mom like they need to? Is the family – is the parents' marriage not working because the spouse cheated or is the marriage not working because the soldier who is trained to kill does not know how to express his emotions with his spouse anymore? I mean, there's so many different dynamics as to the reason why they are coming to you – you have to dig and figure out what that real reason is and try to work with it there. And to help them find support – they can't do it by themselves, so another thing I could tell a social worker is they need to have a support system around them, whoever that may be. If the wife is a stay-at-home mom, she needs to find something to do outside of the home. She needs to join a club or get in an exercise class or something...the kids – they need to be involved in programs for military children because they're gonna be around other children that are going through the same exact thing that they are going through and they're gonna find one or two friends that they can hang out with and that's gonna understand the things that they're going through.

When I mean support, I mean the neighbor across the street or it could be their church, but I would encourage them – especially if they're new to the military or if they've just moved to that area to branch out and not just stay in their little world–.



Social workers should have tons of resources available to them. So if the parent doesn't even know where to start, you could at least point them in, the school has an after-school program for children. Or like my son – the blessing I had when I was a military spouse was that his high school had a late bus, which gave him the ability to stay after school with his friends and be in extracurricular activities when I worked and my husband was deployed – that late bus brought him home and I didn't have to worry about getting him. So finding the resources – giving them the resources that are in that military community for them to touch base with.

## **Monica**

I would tell them to definitely watch out for the emotional aspects. I can't emphasize that enough...I remember a story where we had moved out to Upper Heyford, by this time frame, and there were two children that lived on the same block as I did and they also happened to attend the same school that I did and I remember noticing that there was a bit of a change that had overcome them and I couldn't really figure out or understand why. Well, the rumor, I remember hearing – and I think it was finally confirmed as true is that their mother had committed suicide and it was a bit of a shock when I heard that. As a matter of fact, it was a shock to a lot of people... because it was just like it seemed like they had a happy family life and kept to themselves, but again, you never know what goes on behind closed doors and so I remember that affecting [them] in a bit of an interesting way because they seemed a bit more quiet, a bit more withdrawn, they had gone from being happy children who were on the bus and happy all the time to becoming just very withdrawn, so the emotional aspect of being away from home for so many years...and then also, too, there was some military wives... who had to deal with the emotional aspect of their husbands having affairs...and so that was – and that also, too, would impact the children, so if I had to give any advice to social workers, be aware of the emotional aspect – be really aware of what the home climate is at the house. Watch for little warning signs. If you're working with a child and this child is bubbly and out and just outgoing and just radiant – and then all of a sudden you begin to notice the radiance begin to kind-of die off and drop, begin to drop back...pay attention to that. That might be a sign there's something going on that you need to be aware of... in the home life. Also, too, be very mindful of the parents and also, again, with their emotional and mental states are...because, again, parents can affect the lives of their children and they do affect the lives of their children quite a bit and so if the parents aren't functioning well, then the home's not gonna function very well and that's gonna affect the children. So again, just be mindful of the parents' functioning as well on the mental and emotional level...the other advice I would give is that sometimes military children can be moody and sometimes they can act out or you may notice that they have a tendency to be kind-of – or if they

seem like they can manifest an idea, I should say, of maybe like – I don't know – like obedience defiance disorder or something like that...understand that a lot of times it's not because that child is a brat, it's not because that child hasn't been raised, it's just that the child is acting out because it's this child's way of maybe getting, again, the emotional piece noticed – so they can get something healed...or it could be, again, it's like – a lot of fits of anger, a lot of fits of rage – this child does not know how to channel correctly and so they are oppositionally defiant in some manner, for example...the other thing, again, like I said, I would really watch out for is also if a child happens to have any older siblings, be mindful of them, too...even if, let's say the older siblings are in the range of being teenagers or maybe are already grown, but they happen to be still being able to travel with their dads or their mom as part of the military family, be mindful of them, too, because a lot of time frames, they're also going through emotional things, they're also going through...their own struggle and...sometimes they are – how can I put this? Sometimes older siblings are put on a pedestal and they are expected to act in a certain manner and be an example for their younger siblings and sometimes that puts a lot of extra pressure on them – it causes them to maybe act in a way that's less than healthy or, that is less than what would be considered acceptable. So, really, I guess at the end of the day, to summarize it is just be mindful of the home environment and be very, very careful of...be very careful of the emotional states of everyone in a military family.

## **Chandler**

I would say consider the various challenges that each member of the family will face because the challenges that the military member and the spouse will face will be different challenges and the challenges that children face are different than those of their parents, so there's no one-stop shopping kind-of situation where you'll go and fix just the military members' problems and then great, everybody else will be good – like there's different problems to address based on who you're working with. So I mean just in terms of whatever struggle the military member themselves might be facing, you have to approach those problems in a totally different way than if the military spouse is feeling totally overwhelmed by all of their responsibility because they have a separate set of responsibilities that they are supposed to take care of – if they feel completely overwhelmed by those – those are two completely different things. You're gonna need to approach the spouse in a different way than you are the military member because the spouse is having a struggle with their own set of responsibilities and as the military child, you have your own set of responsibilities. Your responsibility is to support your family, but also when you move to a new place, don't guilt your military parent about it – it's not their fault that you had to move to a new place, but you

may still feel upset about what's happening, so then you would have to approach each family member in a different way.

## **Taylor**

I think – like I said, my biggest platform is kind-of mental illness and also I think understanding the person...and where they're coming from...and kind-of like you're doing now, kind-of understanding – not only the child's perspective, but maybe even why did you get into this and did you feel pressured because people get into this – I have a lot of friends who are in the military and they hated it...it's not what they anticipated, so kinda, I think, understanding people from that point of view...yeah!

The participants recommend that social workers consider each family member as an individual and consider the family as a unit when working with military families.

Social workers need to know the resources available to military families. Social workers should know the resources available to *that* specific individual and *that* specific family.

Resources available to families on Active Duty living on a military post or base are not the same as resources available to families of Reserve and National Guard families whose service member might be on Active Duty and the family might remain in their local community, or a Veteran family. Social workers would need to be familiar with resources that are accessible to families in their local community. Social Workers, whether serving individuals within the Active Duty military, veterans, or Reserve or National Guard should become familiar with the internal policies of the organization that they work with. They should also be aware of the following recommendations for the military to better provide resources for those who serve.

## **Recommendations for the Military**

### **Joan**

Well, I don't know how they go about things now and I'm sure now today they probably intermingle more with the civilian life than we did when we

were in the military because we were protected. And they probably don't get that same protection today.

You know what – at the time it was a benefit, but once you came out into civilian life, it was a challenge. Every day was a challenge, it was a different – something different every day. That you knew nothing about, that you had to learn how to adapt to –. Like...when we found out what was going on in the world. We were sheltered from all of that and when you went out to try to get a job or whatever – the – whatever the case may be...it was a bad time for Black people and you didn't realize that until you left the military and went out into civilian life. Do you know how hard it was to get a good job back then?

## **Marshall**

...I think – my advice to the military is practice what you're fighting for. If you're fighting for the constitution, if you're fighting for free speech, if you're fighting for...religious freedom, if you're fighting for...separation of church and the state, if you're fighting for...co-equal...parts of the government– take care of families before you take care of the neighbors. If you have a glass house and you're telling somebody else how to live and they can see in your house, they see you're not living it. You can't sell that. You can't sell that, so I think the military oughta be a place accepting of all Americans equally and I think the military...should be accepting of not just saying we recognize this religion or we recognize we have Hispanic or we recognize – No! Recognition and acceptance are two different things...and I think they recognize a lot of stuff, but they don't accept it and they don't – they don't...they don't even want to add it to the stew. It's an ingredient over here that we have an option to use, but only if somebody insists we put it in there. I insist on corn in my gumbo, then they'll put it in there, but they'll put three-grain and as soon as you leave, they're gonna take those three grains out and have the gumbo that they're used to. You get my analogy?

I'm saying that military doesn't practice what it preaches. I don't think it's an environment where all races are equal and I don't think it's an environment where...people have religious freedom. I was told countless times as far as when we went to Biloxi, Mississippi, I was told, 'Marshall, you can just not say it sometimes. You can just let it go! You can just let people spout what they want to spout and even if you think they're ignorant and not respond! You can choose not to respond.' I don't think in a military environment that should be encouraged. I think it should be encouraged to hear all points of view, especially if somebody's screeching at the top of their lungs, I think the other points of view – at least be able to say I don't agree without being shown the door. And that's not the environment we have.

No! I'm not a subversive! I mean, my dad did wars, I was raised in the military! I've spent more times supporting the military than most people and I've never gotten a dime from the military and I put a lot of years into it. I am not a subversive, but at the same time, if my daddy's got issues or my momma's got issues or I've got a crazy uncle, I'm gonna be the one to say so! That doesn't make me just loyal, 'cause I love you anyway and I'm gonna be who I am anyway.

**Gina**

While I think there are resources and stuff out there for military – and I think the military is beginning to understand – which the world doesn't understand, basically, is when they come home and they are traumatized – and they do a lot of things that are different than what they should do because they are and so with the help and assistance of the military, they maybe can get all the resources that they need to feel whole, or to help them out to make – see, one thing about it – a military person doesn't want to admit that there's a problem, so it's a lot – it's harder for them to go in and get help because to go in and get help means there's a problem, so...so it's real important that -- that we convince the person to seek out some help...make it easy for the wife, the spouse, to call someone to see – to help this person and stuff. Like my husband, for instance, he is – he's sort-of like – he's the main one – he just don't want to face up to the fact that there are issues. So I'm finally getting him – he didn't even want to talk about his benefits because that means – as far as the benefits, there's the issue. So I would just tell the military to make it easy on them as possible – hurry up and give them what they need, don't prolong it and make it difficult because most of the people who did go overseas and in the war so far, they have some issues.

**Jada**

I would say...helping the spouse that's home. Making sure the grass is cut if the grass needs to be cut where they're living...making sure they have transportation...just resources that they need for when the other spouse is gone.

**Tracie**

– Recognize that – for those folks that are single, obviously, that are in the military, that's a different story. For those folks that have families, also understand that that family is a huge part of the success of that military member. They, too, while they may not be on the front lines or they may not be on the flight line or what not, they also have an impact on that military's well-being and they need to understand that there should be some resources and things that are available for family members and that

when you're looking at transition, whether it's moving or what not, understanding that it just isn't the military member that has to adapt, he's got a family, a wife and children that also have to adapt, but overall, I think the military – I can speak for the Air Force – I think they've done a good job – the Army as well as the Marine Corp and the Navy- I can't speak that well, too, I've just heard stories that...sometimes the transition is not as easy for those folks and those families in that particular branch, but I don't know that to be true 'cause all I saw was the Air Force side.

### **Karen**

Well, two things – ensuring that there are access points – whether that's in the medical facilities...counseling, FRG (Family Resource Group) or spouses network, key spouse networks that allow families to go and talk to them without the stigma of talking to someone...and these are – I don't know a lot about this because I don't have kids, but I wonder how much of these treatments are actually covered by TriCare (military health insurance) and making those – that might prohibit some people from seeking treatment because maybe total coverage isn't covered...I know over the years, we've done a better job of taking the stigma away from talking to a counselor or seeking psychiatric help especially for those people with security clearances, so I think we've made great strides to...highlighting those across the board, I think we could do a better job in highlighting the accessibility of a lot of these programs to people.

### **Jane**

The advice I would have for the military is to ensure that we move from the model of looking just at the soldier and not looking at the family. There was a comment and I even heard it just this week of the Army didn't – if the Army wanted to assign you a family, they would have gave it to you and that's just not effective. What that simply means is when I tell you to do something and it's a challenge and you can't find day care or whatever, it's basically saying figure it out. The Army didn't give you that family, you're a problem, and that's not true. The Army has to continue to look at when someone comes as a service member, we have to look at the duality – it's not just a service member this is somebody's son and we need to recognize that – this may be somebody's husband, this may be a father and in all of that, what services or what do we have for that person because he's not serving – they are serving and that is what I've always tried to talk to my bosses and people that I work for to step back and look at that – everyone is serving, so when you say stay late, you're telling all of them – we're all involved, so that's the recommendation I would give to them.

## **Veronica**

It's not just about the soldier. You can't think of it – there's an old saying if they wanted you to have a wife, they would have issued you one or something – I think they are doing a better job – well, they were. It all depends on who's the President of the United States, I think, but they were doing a better job of understanding that the family is just as important as the soldier is, or the seaman – whatever the other branches are, I'm not talking about just the Army. They have to remember the family. If that family falls apart, then that soldier or Marine person is probably not going to make it as well, so it's just as important... And the social workers need to understand the military – they need to be involved in those resources and programs, so they can understand military life...it's much easier for me to go to a social worker if I know they actually understand what I'm talking about, than just somebody who has a license to give their opinion.

## **Monica**

To help address, I would definitely recommend...family therapy and counseling...honestly, I think it would be great if prior to deployment overseas, for example, or to any base, really...that the family come in and that therapists talk to them about any challenges that may be going on...currently and then also help to prepare the family to move...and when I say prepare them to move, talk to the parents about – this is what you may see happening as a result of the move, your children may become withdrawn because this is their way of saying oh my gosh, I'm having to give up everything again, what's going on? And also talk to children letting them know what to expect with this move...I think another aspect that really would be helpful is of course, if counseling mom, is military families coming together and actually having a conversation with each other about what's going on and what's taking place and what's happening and helping each other to understand and to see that basically helping each other to understand to see what's going on and helping them to gain perspective on why this is happening...and how everything is going to play out and also letting each other know that in the event you need support or in the event you need extra care...emotionally, mentally, whatever the case may be, knowing that it's ok to come to a member of the family and that you'll always have that support that's there to get you – to get you the help that you need.

## **Chandler**

Honestly, it would be very similar advice – just it would be to consider the different challenges that are faced within one family and also to remember that dependents that are supporting the military member...they also need care and support and attention as well. It's not just about the person who's

actively serving in the military – the whole family in a sense is serving in the military.

## **Taylor**

I think not waiting until the last minute. A big thing they do is kind-of just say you're ok, you can get a Band-Aid, you'll be all right, or you don't have a problem with your psyche – and kind-of just pushing things aside, or pushing them under the rug...and under-estimating things...and I think having better doctors, even – like sometimes the doctors are just there to write a note and keep them pushing – ... I was told by my mother – I don't really know the whole scheme of things for that – it was maybe his medicine? But I think that understanding what you're giving people...I think they too easily pat people on the back and get them any kind of medicine that they feel they want rather than what they need.

Most of the resources mentioned by the participants: providing counseling for the individual family members, giving resources to families when the service member is deployed, and encouraging the service member to get counseling when needed; all these resources the military currently says that it provides to families. Karen and Jane, who are currently in the military, say that even though the military says these resources are available, it is still a negative to the service member's record if they or their family members use these resources, or use the resources "too often." Karen, Jane, and Veronica (whose husband left the military in 2016) said they still hear a variation of "if the military had wanted you to have a family, the military would have issued you a family." With these sentiments still expressed today, it is not hard to imagine that the military must match what it says with internal changes so that today's military families do not continue to endure what previous generations have lived through.

## **Implications for Social Work Practice**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) considered the implication for social work practice on these issues so important that a special committee wrote a report



on preparing social workers to work with returning service members, veterans, families, and the communities that are impacted (CSWE, 2010). Because of the stigma within the military associated with receiving behavioral health services (Blaisure, 2012; Blaisure et al., 2012; Coll et al., 2013; Daley, 1999; Wright et al., 2013), many service members, veterans, and their family members who seek behavioral health services choose to seek assistance from civilian social workers (CSWE, 2010; Daley, Carlson, & Evans, 2015; Franklin, 2013).

Previously, the term “military social worker” (Daley, 1999) was used to designate a social worker who was on active duty within the military. Today the term is used to include any social worker who works with military personnel (Daley et al., 2015). Because today’s social worker is more likely to encounter in their practice a service member, veteran, or a family member, I recommend that schools of social work integrate knowledge of military culture into the curriculum. Daley et al. (2015) suggested methods to integrate military culture into the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for each course instead of having a special module on military culture and military social work.

### **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is knowledge about the situations people live in on a daily basis. A social worker must not only have a sense of cultural competence for military culture and families, but also competence for Black families. Knowledge gained by reading a book or taking a class does not always confer competence. Social workers who work with families of color have a responsibility to make extra effort to get to know the culture of these families. There are many ways to do this, including attending social

cultural events such as Hispanic community cultural events, Black Expos, and similar events in the community. Having personal knowledge and experiences will strengthen the social worker's ability to have professional/client relationships with minorities or individuals outside his/her own culture.

Though cultural competence is essential, it is not enough. Pitner and Sakamota (2005) described "critical consciousness" as "continuously reflecting on and examining how our own biases, assumptions, and cultural worldviews affect the ways we perceive diversity and power dynamics at a personal level" (p. 485). Pitner and Sakamota (2005) contend that critical consciousness means relinquishing your position power and partnering with the client. This was described as an ongoing process. Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1997) invited us to look at the ability to work effectively with clients as "cultural humility." "Cultural humility "incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, to redressing the power imbalances in the patient-physician dynamic, and to developing mutually beneficial and nonpaternalistic clinical and advocacy partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations" (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1997, p. 117).

Even though the Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1997) study pertained to physician training, as health professionals, social workers should also follow this lifelong commitment to understand their own prejudices, to partner with their clients, and to leave aside any power that they have over clients. While this study was written for doctors, the Pitner and Sakamota (2005) article was written for all "human service providers" and specifically included social workers in this group.

## **Areas for Future Research**

This study opens the door for research with Black military families but, there is still much to discover. There is some urgency in trying to capture the stories of the parents of these participants and other parents their age. Since some of these parents served in World War II and, as indicated in the individual introductions, several parents are now deceased, interviewing living parents might be the first follow up. Each sibling has their own story. Some sibling stories were included in this study (Gina and Jada, Tracie and Monica). There is also the voices of a mother and daughter (Marshall and Chandler). There were some similarities in their stories but also definitely some differences, usually based on age differences and the person's place in the family. The middle child had a different perspective from children who were many years older and younger children may have a different viewpoint because the family dynamic had changed. Most of the service member parents advanced through the ranks and achieved some higher status in the military which included perks that created an easier life for the family. The officer's children's stories were different from the enlisted children's stories. Having a study just on officer's children or just on enlisted children might present some different useful information for health practitioners.

Those participants who also married a service member (Marshall, Veronica, Monica) shared some of their lives as military spouses. A follow-up study on military spouses would be beneficial not only for social workers and other health practitioners, but also for the military since it seems evident that the changes the military desires for its service persons and their families have not been implemented throughout its ranks. There could also be a study based on families that includes divorce, addiction, mental health

needs, or other challenges these families encounter and how they worked through those challenges.

Posttraumatic growth and the Black military family would be a good study. There is trauma for these participants in moving, leaving behind friends and the known, and other challenges. There can be trauma in always having to be cognizant that everything you do will impact the parent in the military.

An interesting follow-up study would be tracing the history of racism in the United States in parallel to these families' stories. What was occurring in regards to race relations in the United States at the time participants in this study were living in southern military posts that contributed to their families not being allowed to leave the post? Were their Black school peers going to segregated schools, which might be the reason why the participants considered local school education to be inferior to what they encountered in most DOD schools? Was there truly no discrimination within the military, or was it necessary for parents to live like there was no discrimination because they did not want to lose the life of the military that was better than the life they left?

### **Limitations**

This study presents the experiences of 11 women who grew up in military families. While some of their experiences seem to be repeated, some of the challenges and benefits are similar, many of the recommendations to social workers and the military are the same. Their experiences are unique. This information is needed. All the participants of this study had a college education. They also have what can be seen as positions of responsibility. This study describes the stories of these participants and cannot be generalized to all Black daughters of military families. It would be interesting

to see if women who are Black daughters of military families, but who might not have positions of authority, perceived their military experience in the same way. It would also be interesting to learn the differences and similarities of military sons and White daughters of military families. This study is a good starting point. There is still much to learn.

## **Conclusion**

The participants did not fit the feminist theories explored earlier in this study. It is possible that the Fortress was such a male world that they did not see or interpret their experience through a feminist lens. The participants did not look at inequalities in their opportunities, they created opportunities if the parents did not make opportunities available. They did not look at inequalities between the sexes or consider gender differences. They were in an environment that encouraged the participants to accept their world as it was and to develop their talents. hooks' (1984) view that it is unfair to consider all women as being oppressed fits well with this group of women. There is enough diversity among this group of women that class, race, religion, sexual preferences, and similar factors helped to determine the extent to which sexism influenced the lives of these women (hooks, 1984).

The participants had many experiences as the Black daughters of military families. They experienced similar challenges and benefits, but each in her own way. In many situations there was not a realization that they were Black until contact with civilians in later years. Often that realization did not come in a pleasant way, but as an unexpected surprise from peers who had never moved away from the local community, from unaccepting school administrators or teachers, or from visits to their parents' local

communities. The intersection of their parents' experiences, growing up inside the Fortress, exposure to different cultures, peoples, and outside-the-Fortress experiences all lead to a conclusion that parts of the MMRI pertains to the participants' expression of what it means to be Black. This includes a combination of existing theories with four assumptions of identities being situationally influenced, with individuals having several hierarchically ordered and different identities, of an individual's self-perception of racial identity being the most valid part of their self-identity. In this study this self-perception is greatly influenced by the participant being in a military family and concerning an individual's racial identity changing as that person matures.

The four dimensions of MMRI (Sellers et al., 1998) were identified in this group of participants. Racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group, and the ideology associated with the identity were all shown. The participants exhibit a nationalist philosophy, they can identify with oppressed minorities even though for most of their lives they see themselves as having benefits provided by the military that the oppressed have not had an opportunity to experience. They view all humans as having similarities except for the advantages of the military. Most of the participants considered themselves to be an American military brat with pride. They entered mainstream America. They do not deny racism, and in fact experienced racism, but does not let it define them. This is the assimilationist philosophy. While one participant (Marshall) said that she does not want to assimilate, her description of her life shows that she did.

I have attempted to share each woman's individual story and show how it fits, or in some cases did not fit, the theoretical underpinnings of the research. These women are

uniquely a part of everything around them, and cannot be identified by anyone other than themselves (Collins, 2009; Lorde, 1984, 2009). I further made an attempt to let each woman speak for herself and share her own story. These women had challenges as military daughters. They overcame these challenges and leveraged the benefits of military life to become successful. Their stories are a window into this hidden group who also serve our country.

## **Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer**

## **Appendix B: Interview Guide**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDY**

#### **The Intersection of Military Family Culture and Black Families Culture: Coping Skills of Black Daughters of Military Families**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning (afternoon, evening). My name is Pinkie Evans and I am a PhD candidate at Indiana University School of Social Work. Thank you for taking part in this study.

I am going to ask you some questions about what it was like growing up in a military family as an African American girl. I am especially interested in understanding the challenges and benefits of that experience. This information will be used by social workers and others who work with military families so they have a better understanding of daughters' experiences. You are free to answer only those questions you wish to answer and we can stop at any time.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

In order that I capture our conversation accurately, I am recording this conversation. To protect your identity, you can give me a name that you would like for me to use if I quote you for the paper that I will write from the information that I gather. Do I have your permission to continue this conversation (informed consent)?

#### **CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

I first have a few general questions about your family and life in the military.

Who was in your family when you were growing up?



*After each family member mentioned:* Tell me a bit about your [dad, mom, sister, etc.]

You indicated that your (parent) was in the military. Can you tell me what you remember about his/her role in the military?

Please tell me a little about the places your family lived while (parent) was in the military. Tell me about your family life in each of the places.

What stands out in your mind about growing up in a military family?

## **CHALLENGES**

What challenges did you experience growing up in a military family?

*For each challenge:*

Tell me more about that.

Tell me what made that a challenge?

How did the challenge affect you?

So that I can best understand that challenge, give me a specific example of an event that you can remember when that challenge played out for you?

Tell me about the event. When did it occur? What happened during the event?

Tell me what strategies you used to manage that challenge? By strategies,

I mean anything you did to address or deal with the challenge.

Did anyone else help you manage that challenge? If so, who? How did they help you manage the challenge?

Tell me about another challenge. (Gather information on as many challenges as the participant identifies).

## **BENEFITS**

What benefits did you experience growing up in a military family?

*For each benefit:*

Please tell me more about that.

Tell me what made that a benefit.

How did it affect you?

So that I can best understand that benefit, give me a specific example of an event that you can remember when that benefit played out for you? Tell me about the event. When did it occur? What happened during the event?

Tell me about another benefit. (Gather information on as many benefits as the participant identifies).

## **CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

What else is important for me to know about the challenges and benefits of growing up in a military family?

Do you believe that being an African American affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)

What advice would you give to social workers who work with military families?

What advice would you have for the military to help families address the challenges you have mentioned?

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Do you have any questions for me now?

## **Appendix C: Demographic Questions**

### **The Intersection of Military Family Culture and Black Families Culture: Coping**

#### **Skills of Black Daughters of Military Families**

##### **Demographic Questions**

I am 18 years of age or older. I understand the purpose of this research and I agree to participate in this interview.

I am the African American/Black daughter of someone who served in the military and/or currently serves in the military for at least 5 years.

Before I start the interview, I have several questions about you and your [father's] military service.

##### **[Participant data]**

What is your current age?

What is your current partner status (i.e. are you married or do you have a partner)

Do you have children? How many?

What is your current occupation?

What state do you currently live in?

Is this the state that you consider "home" when you were growing up?

##### **[Parent's military service]**

Which parent was in the military?

What branch of the service was he/she in?

How many years was he/she in the service? [If you do not know the exact number of years, just give an estimate]

Was your parent in combat? Is so, which wars and/or conflicts?

Was your parent deployed or separated from the family even if not in combat (if applicable)?

How many times was your parent deployed? (if applicable)

What was the longest period of separation? (if applicable)

## **Appendix D: Final Interview Guide**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDY**

#### **The Intersection of Military Family Culture and Black Families Culture: Coping Skills of Black Daughters of Military Families**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning (afternoon, evening). My name is Pinkie Evans and I am a PhD candidate at Indiana University School of Social Work. Thank you for taking part in this study.

I am 18 years of age or older. I understand the purpose of this research and I agree to participate in this interview.

I am the African American/Black daughter of someone who served in the military and/or currently serves in the military for at least 5 years.

I am going to ask you some questions about what it was like growing up in a military family as an African American girl. I am especially interested in understanding the challenges and benefits of that experience. This information will be used by social workers and others who work with military families so they have a better understanding of daughters' experiences. You are free to answer only those questions you wish to answer and we can stop at any time.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

In order that I capture our conversation accurately, I am recording this conversation. To protect your identity, you can give me a name that you would like for me to use if I quote you for the paper that I will write from the information that I gather. Do I have your permission to continue this conversation (informed consent)?

Before I start the interview, I have several questions about you and your [father's] military service.

**[Participant data]**

What is your current age?

What is your current partner status (i.e. are you married or do you have a partner) (probe for multiple marriages, was there a divorce?, married a military person?)

Do you have children? How many?

What is your current occupation? Expand on role of military spouse, if appropriate

What state do you currently live in?

Is this the state that you consider "home" when you were growing up?

**[Parent's military service]**

Which parent was in the military?

What branch of the service was he/she in?

How many years was he/she in the service? [If you do not know the exact number of years, just give an estimate]

Was your parent in combat? If so, which wars and/or conflicts?

Was your parent deployed or separated from the family even if not in combat (if applicable)?

How many times was your parent deployed? (if applicable)

What was the longest period of separation? (if applicable)

What was parent's rank at leaving the military? Retired?

## **CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

I first have a few general questions about your family and life in the military.

Who was in your family when you were growing up?

*After each family member mentioned:* Tell me a bit about your [dad, mom, sister, etc.]

You indicated that your (parent) was in the military. Can you tell me what you remember about his/her role in the military?

Please tell me a little about the places your family lived while (parent) was in the military. Tell me about your family life in each of the places.

What stands out in your mind about growing up in a military family?

## **CHALLENGES**

What challenges did you experience growing up in a military family?

*For each challenge:*

Tell me more about that.

Tell me what made that a challenge?

How did the challenge affect you?

So that I can best understand that challenge, give me a specific example of an event that you can remember when that challenge played out for you?

Tell me about the event. When did it occur? What happened during the event?

Tell me what strategies you used to manage that challenge? By strategies, I mean anything you did to address or deal with the challenge.

Did anyone else help you manage that challenge? If so, who? How did they help you manage the challenge?

Tell me about another challenge. (Gather information on as many challenges as the participant identifies).

## **BENEFITS**

What benefits did you experience growing up in a military family?

*For each benefit:*

Please tell me more about that.

Tell me what made that a benefit.

How did it affect you?

So that I can best understand that benefit, give me a specific example of an event that you can remember when that benefit played out for you? Tell me about the event. When did it occur? What happened during the event?

Tell me about another benefit. (Gather information on as many benefits as the participant identifies).

## **CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

What else is important for me to know about the challenges and benefits of growing up in a military family?

Do you believe that being an African American affected the challenges and benefits you experienced? If so, in what way(s)

What advice would you give to social workers who work with military families?

What advice would you have for the military to help families address the challenges you have mentioned?

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Do you have any questions for me now?



## **Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement**

### Confidentiality Agreement

#### Transcriptionist

I, Cathy S. Butler, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality to any and all audiotapes, electronic submissions, and documentations received from Pinkie I. Evans related to her research study on the researcher study titled: **The Intersection of Military Family Culture and Black Family Culture: Coping Skills of Black Daughters of Military Families.**

Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, electronic submissions, or in any associated documents.
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes, electronic submissions, or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher.
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
4. To return all audiotapes, electronic submissions, and study-related materials to Pinkie I. Evans in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back-up devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals in I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber's signature\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Air Force IRB Approval

**DEPARTMENT OF  
THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES AIR  
FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC**

MEMORANDUM FOR INDIANA UNIVERSITY

3 0

NOV 2017

FROM: AFMSA/SGE-C

Research Oversight &  
Compliance Division  
7700 Arlington Blvd.  
Ste. 5151  
Falls Church, VA 22042-5151

SUBJECT: Human Research Protection Official (HRPO) Review of  
**FSG2017045E**

References: (a) 32 CFR 219, *Protection of Human Subjects, Paragraph 102*

(b) DoDI3216.02\_AFI40-402, *Protection of Human  
Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in Air  
Force Supported Research*

In accordance with Reference (a), 101(b)(2), the HRPO has reviewed and concurs with the exempt determination of the following:

**FSG20170045E**, "The Intersection of Military Family Culture and Black Families Culture: Coping Skills of Black Daughters of Military Families"

Please ensure this research is conducted in compliance with the References, including Reference (b), as it pertains to submission of continuing review reports, proper maintenance of records, and the application of written informed consent to all study participants, as required by the IRB.

Contact AFMSA/SGE-C at [usaf.pentagon.af-sg.mbx.afmsa-sge-c@mail.mil](mailto:usaf.pentagon.af-sg.mbx.afmsa-sge-c@mail.mil) to discuss any substantive change to this activity prior to implementation to ensure it does not impact the determination herein or compliance with the above references.

Please refer to the Terms of Air Force HRPO Approval (attached) regarding reporting requirements and responsibilities of the Principal Investigator to the HRPO. Failure to comply could result in suspension of funding.

PETER MARSHALL, CIP  
Program Manager AF  
Research Oversight &  
Compliance Division

Attachment:

Terms of AF HRPO Approval

**BREAKING BARRIERS...SINCE 1947**

## **TERMS OF AIR FORCE HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION OFFICIAL (HRPO)**

### **APPROVAL**

1. By virtue of the Air Force (AF) support (see definition in DoDI 3216.02\_AFI 40-402) provided to the non-Department of Defense (DoD) institution performing the activity identified herein, this activity must comply with all applicable federal, DoD, and AF human research protection requirements. In addition to the requirements identified in conducting non-DoD institution's Federalwide Assurance, compliance with the following laws, regulations, and guidance is required:
  - Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 219 (32 CFR 219), Department of Defense Regulations, <sup>11</sup>"Protection of Human Subjects"
  - Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46, (45 CFR 46) Department of Health and Human Services Regulations, <sup>11</sup>"Protection of Human Subjects," Subparts B, C, D, and E as made applicable by DoD Instruction (DoDI) 3216.02
  - Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations 50, 56, 312, and 812, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Regulations
  - DoDI 3216.02, <sup>11</sup>"Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD-supported Research"
  - Title 10 United States Code Section 980 (10 USC 980), <sup>11</sup>"Limitation on Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects"
  - DoDI 3210.7, <sup>11</sup>"Research Integrity and Misconduct"
  - DoDI 6200.02, <sup>11</sup>"Application of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Rules to Department of Defense Force Health Protection Programs"
  - DoDI 3216.02\_AFI 40-402, "Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in Air Force Supported Research"
2. Below is a select list of requirements from the regulations and guidance listed above. The non-DoD institution should communicate with the supporting AF institution to ensure compliance.

- Ensure all DoD supported activities have DoD Human Research Protection Official (HRPO) review to ensure compliance prior to start
  - Conduct initial and continuing research ethics education for personnel who are engaged in the research
  - Ensure IRB consideration of scientific merit of new research and any substantive amendments thereto
  - Ensure additional protections for military research subjects to minimize undue influence
  - Explain to subjects any provisions for medical care for research-related injury
  - Report continuing review documentation, unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others, serious or continuing non-compliance, adverse events, research-related injury, and suspensions or terminations of research
  - Appoint a research monitor, when necessary
  - Safeguard for research conducted with international populations
  - Protect pregnant women, prisoners, and children
  - Comply with DoD limitations on research where consent by legally authorized representatives is proposed
  - Comply with DoD limitation on exceptions from informed consent (e.g., 10 USC 980, 45 CFR 46, and 21 CFR SO)
  - Comply with limitations on dual compensation for U. S. military personnel
  - Follow DoD requirements for additional review for DoD-sponsored survey research or survey research within DoD
  - Address and report allegations of non-compliance with human research protections
  - Address and report allegations of research misconduct
  - Follow procedures for addressing financial and other conflicts of interest
  - Prohibit research with prisoners of war (POW)
  - Comply with requirements for investigations of Food and Drug Administration regulated products (drugs, devices, and biologics)
  - Follow recordkeeping requirements
  - Support oversight by the supporting DoD Component (which may include DoD Component review of the research, requests for documentation such as Institutional Review Board (IRB) membership rosters, and site visits)
3. Please contact the supporting AF institution (e.g., via the Program Manager responsible for oversight of the relevant activity) with any questions for the AF HRPO.

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Westphal, R. J., & Convoy, S. P. (2015). Military culture implications for mental health and nursing care. *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 20(1), Manuscript 4.

Wright, E. R., Greene, M. S., Kooreman, H. E., Watson, D. P., Evans, P. I., Williams, M. J., & Mills, C. (2013). *Substance abuse and mental health concerns in special populations in Indiana for State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup*. Retrieved November 26, 2016, from <http://www.healthpolicy.iupui.edu/PubsPDFs/Substance%20Abuse%20%20Mental%20Health%20Concerns%20in%20Special%20Populations%20in%20Indiana.pdf>

Wynn, N. A. (2011). *The African American experience during World War II*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

**Curriculum Vitae  
Pinkie Irene Evans**

**EDUCATION**

PhD, Indiana University, 2019

Pre-Doctoral Program, Indiana University, 2011-2013

MSW, Indiana University, 2011

MBA, University of North Dakota, 1995

BS, Minot State University, 1992

**GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS**

Indiana University President's Diversity Dissertation Year Fellow, 2017-2018

IU School of Social Work Travel Fellowship, 2017

Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) IU State Doctoral Fellowship, 2014-2018

IU School of Social Work Travel Fellowship, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

Elite 50, IUPUI Graduate and Professional Students (GPSG), 2016

IUPUI Preparing Future Faculty and Professionals (PFFP) Certificate, 2015-2016

IUPUI PFFP 3MT (3-Minute Thesis) Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, 2015

IU School of Social Work, PhD Assistantship, Field Educational Assessment, 2015-2017

IU School of Social Work, PhD Assistantship, Croatia Service Learning Project, 2015-2016

IU School of Social Work, PhD Assistantship, Mental Health and Addictions, 2014-2015

IU School of Social Work, PhD Assistantship, Children's Mental Health, 2013-2014

IUPUI Graduate and Professional Student Government, Educational Enhancement Grant, 2014

IUPUI, Inaugural Staff Council Member of the Year Award, 2013

IU School of Social Work Margaret A. McCormick Scholarship, 2009-2010

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Center for Health Policy, Fairbanks School of Public Health, 2012-2013

Assistant Chair for Administration and Finance, Indiana University School of Medicine, Department of Public Health, 2010-2012, appointed position to help establish the Fairbanks School of Public Health

Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Center for Health Policy, School of Medicine, Department of Public Health, 2010-2012

Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Center for Health Policy, School of Public and Environment Affairs (SPEA), 2009-2010

Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Center for Criminal Justice Research, School of Public and Environment Affairs, (SPEA), 2008-2009

Founding Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Indiana University Public Policy Institute, School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA), 2007-2009

Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana University, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA), 2007-2009

Midwest Division Director of Operations Services, Panhandle Energy, 2004-2006

Midwest Division Administrative Superintendent, Panhandle Energy, 2003-2004

Midwest Division Administrative Supervisor, Panhandle Energy, 2002-2003

Acting Deputy Director for Policy and Planning, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2001

Administrator of Strategic Planning, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2001-2002

Acting Administrator of Office of Environmental Services, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2001

Founding Manager/CEO, Southwest Water Authority, Dickinson, ND, 1995-2001

Assistant Project Manager, North Dakota State Water Commission, Southwest Pipeline Project, 1993-1995

## **APPOINTED POSITIONS**

### **INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

Staff Representative, and Screen Committee, Founding Dean, Fairbanks School of Public Health, 2012-2013

Assistant Chair of Administration and Finance, Executive Committee, School of Medicine, Department of Public Health, 2010-2012

Development of new School of Public Health; developed seven-year budgets for approval of IUPUI Office of Administration and Finance, Indiana University Budget Office, Indiana University Board of Trustees, and Indiana State Department of Higher Education: facility planning for new school of public health including office space requirements, equipment, and timelines for faculty and staff hiring; and five new departments  
Member, Search and Screen Committee, Dean, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, 2009

Member, Search and Screen Committee, Executive Associate Dean, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, 2008-2009

### **IUPUI CAMPUS SERVICE**

Chair, Martin Luther King Dinner, Under-represented Professional and Graduate Student Organization (UPnGO), led to awarding of “Defender of Democracy” Award to UPnGO, 2016

Historian, Executive Board, UPnGO, 2015-2016

Member, Black Faculty and Staff Council (BFSC), Finishing Freshman Program, 2014-2015

Member, United Way Steering Committee, 2013-2014

Staff Council Representative, Resource Planning Committee, campus-wide committee that explored best use of campus resources and made recommendations to the Chancellor, 2011-2013

Member, Staff Council Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, 2011-2013

Member, Staff Council Staff Affairs Committee, 2011-2012

Assistant Treasurer, Executive Committee, Black Faculty and Staff Council (BFSC), 2009-2010



Executive Committee, BFSC Student Graduation Initiative, 2008-2010

Academic Mentor, Bepko Learning Center, 2008-2009

## **IU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Member, Diversity Committee, 2015 to present

Student Representative, PhD Committee, 2013-2014

## **IU FAIRBANKS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Administration, Finance, and Editing, CEPH Accreditation Committee for MPH, 2010-2012

Administration, Finance, and Editing, CAHME Accreditation Committee for MHA, 2011-2012

Staff Representative, IUPUI Staff Council, 2011-2013

## **IU SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Member, Search and Screen Committee, Director of Finance & Administration, 2008

Member, Search and Screen Committee, Director of Finance & Administration, 2007

Additional duties of Human Resources and Payroll Coordinator while school searched for new Director of Finance & Administration, 2007-2008

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:**

Walton, B., **Evans, P.I.**, & Kalaw, K.J.D. (April 2016). Translational research in action: Implementation of Indiana's System of Care (SOC). *The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual PhD Research Symposium, Indiana University School of Social Work*, Indianapolis, IN.

Walton, B., **Evans, P.I.**, & Kalaw, K.J.D. (March 2016). Translational research in action: Implementation of Indiana's system of care (SOC). *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Indiana University Bloomington Innovation Conference, The Johnson Center for Innovation and Translational Research*, Bloomington, IN.

**Evans, P.I.**, & Walton, B. (April 2014). Indiana systems of care expansion planning grant survey, *Indiana University Purdue University Research Day*, Indianapolis, IN.

**Evans, P.I.**, (March 2014). Deployment needs for military families: What every social worker should know, *Northwest Indiana Inaugural Social Work Conference*, Merrillville, IN.

**Evans, P.I.**, & Walton, B. (March 2014). Indiana systems of care expansion planning grant processes, *The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Children's Mental Health Research and Policy Conference*, Tampa. FL.

Green, M, **Evans, P.I.**, Wright, E., Liangpunsakul, S., & Mills, C. (October 2012.) Occurrence of mental health and substance use disorders among returning veterans in Indiana. *The 140<sup>th</sup> American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Exposition*, San Francisco, CA.

Mills, C. & **Evans, P.I.** (April 2012). Hoosier veterans: Mental health & substance Abuse concerns. *The 2012 Joint National Public Health Week Conference*, Indianapolis, IN.

Previous professional positions included presentations to US Congressional hearings, State Legislative committees, the Governor, Mayors and City Councils, County Commissioners, citizens, and citizen organizations. Also wrote testimony for State Legislative hearings and Congressional hearings in Washington DC and appeared as expert witness, as needed.

## **PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES**

Daley, J. G., Carlson, J., & **Evans, P.I.** (2015). Military social work as an exemplar in teaching social work competencies. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 51, 576-588.

## **TECHNICAL REPORTS**

**Evans, P.I.** & Walton, B.A. (2014). *Readiness for System of Care Implementation Supporting Child Mental Health Services: Local Perspectives across Indiana. System of Care Implementation Survey (SOCIS). Community Responses (March 2014).* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University School of Social Work.

Walton, B. A., & **Evans, P.I.** (2014). *Readiness for System of Care Implementation Supporting Child Mental Health Services: Local Perspectives across Indiana. System of Care Implementation Survey (SOCIS) Overview (March 2014).* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University School of Social Work.

**Evans, P.I.**, Mills, C., Greene, M.S., Wright, E. R., & Kooreman, H.E. (2013) *Mental health and substance use among veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Concerns in Special Populations in Indiana for State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup*, Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, Center for Health Policy, Indianapolis, IN.

Wright, E.R., Greene, M.S., Kooreman, H.E., Watson, D. P., **Evans, P.I.**, Williams, M.J., & Mills, C. (2013). *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Concerns in Special Populations in Indiana for State Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup*. Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, Center for Health Policy, Indianapolis, IN.

## **WORKSHOP**

**Evans, P.I.**, (2018) Suggestions for Successful Writing. Invited panel member for discussion on successful writing. *Indiana University Graduate School Workshop on Rev Up Your Writing*.

**Evans, P.I.**, (2018) Invited panel member for discussion on considerations for success in Graduate School. *Getting You into IUPUI*.

## **LICENSURE**

Licensed Social Worker (LSW), 2013-2016

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS:**

National Association of Social Workers (NASW), 2008-2017

Indiana NASW (NASW-IN), 2008-2017

American Public Health Association (APHA), 2009-2016

Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), 2015-2017

Team-Based Learning Collaborative (TBLC), 2016-2017

## **VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

BRICKs Alliance, Inc., 2019

Circles Indy, 2019

Member, Board of Directors, Families First Indiana, 2015-2017

Chair, Budget & Finance Committee, Indian Healthy Marriage and Family 2015 Annual Conference, 2015

Member, United Way of Central Indiana, Committee to review applications for Leadership United, 2012 to present

Member, Advisory Committee, Archdiocese of Indianapolis Secretariat for Catholic Charities, 2005-2009

Member, Strategic Planning Committee, Archdiocese of Indianapolis Secretariat for Catholic Charities, 2008-2009

Volunteer, Gennesaret Free Clinics, Art for Beds Fundraiser, 2011

Graduate, United Way of Central Indiana, Executive Women's Leadership Program

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Board of Directors, Girls Scouts USA, Sakakawea Council

Executive Committee, Founding Board of Directors, Southwestern North Dakota Habitat for Humanity

Treasurer, Board of Directors, Western Wellness Foundation

Grants Writer and Facilitator, Board of Directors, Queen City Area Best Friends Program

Member, Special Events Committee, Domestic Violence & Rape Crises Center

Secretary, Board of Directors, Bismarck-Mandan International Club

American Legion Auxiliary

### **SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

Member, National Association of Social Workers-Indiana (NASW-IN), Committee on Racial & Ethnic Diversity, 2012-2013

### **ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Recovery-Orientated Care: From Research to Practice, 2019

Workshops and Conferences 2013-2017

Project Leadership, 2015

Motivational Interviewing, 2014

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), 2014

Workshop on Intergroup Dialogue, 2011

Taking Adversity out of Diversity, 2009

Influencing for Good, 2008

Ground Rules for Proper and Civil Dialogue, 2008

Performance Evaluation Training Workshops, 2010, 2009, 2008

When Generations Collide: Who They Are, Why They Clash, How to Solve the  
Generational Puzzle at Work, 2008

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High, 2007

Culture Shock? And the Ten Ways to embrace it in the Workplace, 2007

Can this Process be saved? (Accelerated Improvement Process), 2009, 2007

IUPUI Mediation Training, 2013, 2010, 2009

Emotional Intelligence: Why it is Crucial at Work, 2009

Riding the Wave: Successful Techniques for Navigating Changes at Work and in Life,  
2009

Tackling Performance Problems Before Discipline Becomes Necessary, 2009

Creating the Optimal Work Experience, 2009

Compliance Training Series, 2010, 2007

Attendance Issues and Time-Off Policies, 2010

## **RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS**

Military social work, military families, minority military families, posttraumatic growth, intersectionality, social justice, public policy, diversity and multiculturalism, qualitative research, resilience, leadership, management, strategic planning, human resources, and cross-disciplinary collaboration